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# BORDER BATTLE

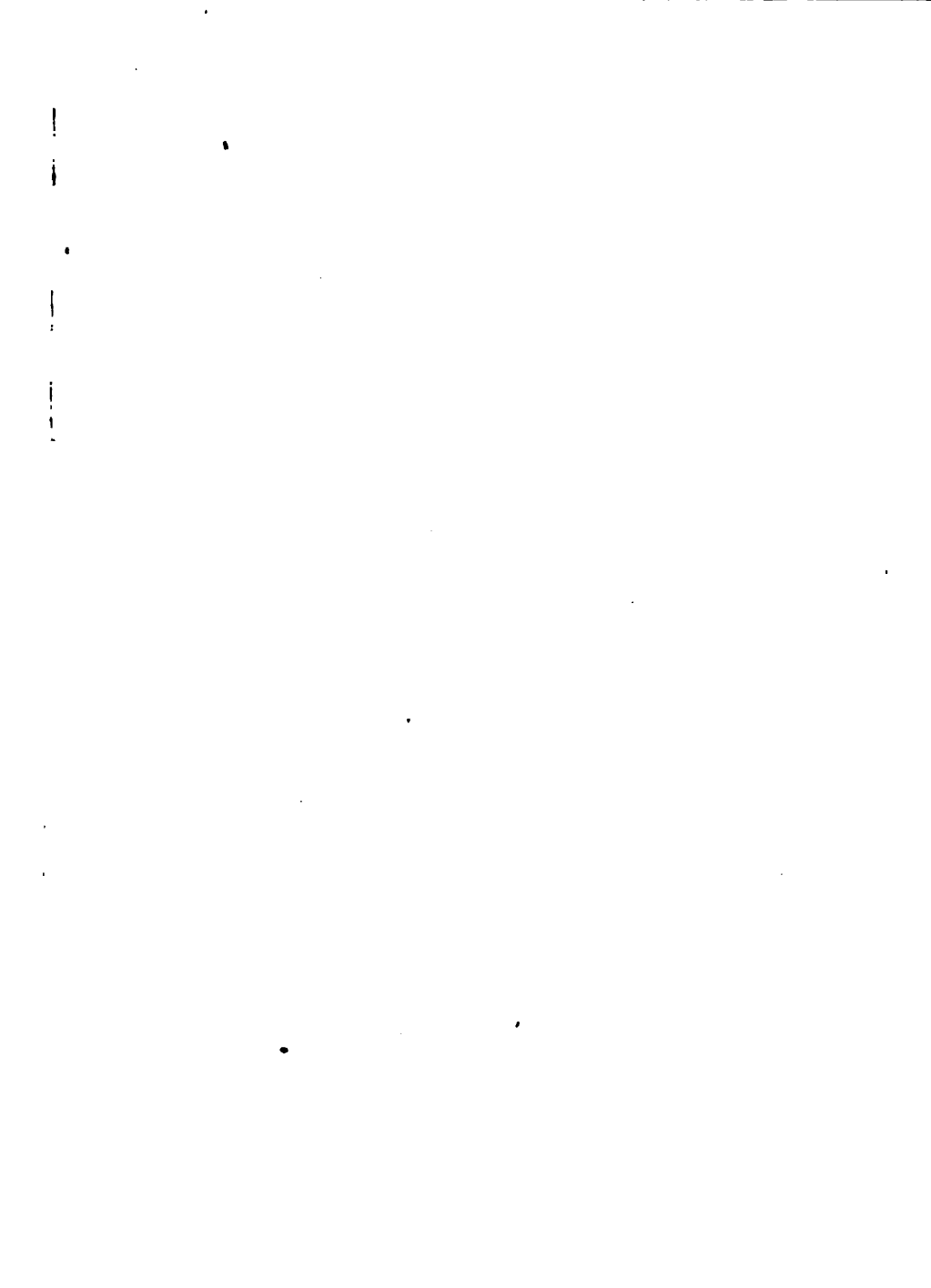


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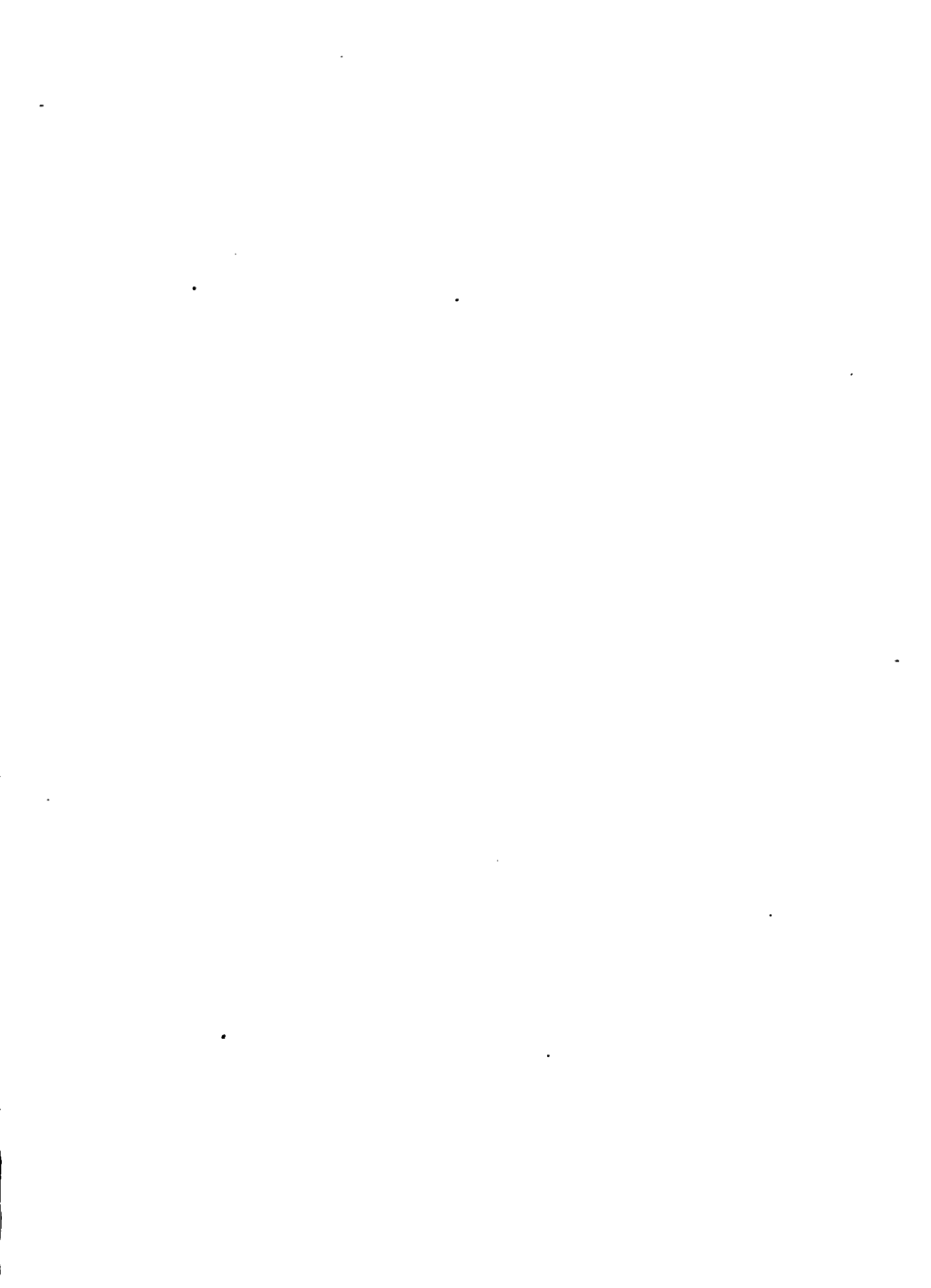




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EDWIN L. SABIN**

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**Boys' Book of Indian Warriors  
Boys' Book of Frontier Fighters**







MESSAGES FROM THE ENEMY

# **BOYS' BOOK OF BORDER BATTLES**

**BY**

**EDWIN L. SABIN**

**Author of "Boys' Book of Indian Warriors,"  
"Boys' Book of Frontier Fighters," etc.**



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Come Peace, not like a mourner bowed  
For honor lost and dear ones wasted,  
But proud, to meet a people proud,  
With eyes that tell of triumph tasted.

Come, while our Country feels the lift  
Of a great instinct shouting Forwards,  
And knows that Freedom's not a gift  
That tarries long in hands of cowards.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

M692892



## FOREWORD

In the United States of North America there have been several great battle-fields, each much larger than the battle-field of France. The first was that of the Ohio River country—the Valley of the Beautiful River which drains Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, West Virginia, and western Pennsylvania. Another, yet larger, was that of the plains and mountains West, extending from Mexico to Canada, and from the Mississippi to the Rockies.

In the Ohio Valley the Shawnees, the Miamis, the War Delawares, the Mingo Iroquois, the Wyandots fought hard to keep the white man out. In the Far West and Southwest the Blackfeet, the Sioux, the Cheyennes, the Kiowas, the Comanches and the Apaches fought equally hard for the same purpose. Boys' Book of Indian Warriors and Boys' Book of Frontier Fighters have told of these and other combats when the red Americans tried to stand off the white Americans.

But both battle-fields saw wars of white and white as well as wars of white and red. In the Ohio Valley the American colonists helped their mother country, England, against the French—and the French lost that region. And in the Southwest the United States fought Mexico.

Boys' Book of Border Battles is therefore white and red. The two other books described mainly the adven-

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## FOREWORD

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tures of chiefs, warriors, pioneers and scouts. This third book is more an American soldier book, of organized fighting on American soil by militia, volunteers, and the regulars of the "old army"—the army in blue instead of khaki and olive drab, which bore the flag from east to west, and broadened the trails of peace.

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# BOYS' BOOK OF BORDER BATTLES

## CHAPTER I

### GEORGE WASHINGTON STANDS FAST (1754)

#### THE AFFAIR OF THE GREAT MEADOWS

**N**OW in the middle of the century which opened with the year 1700 the vast red-man territory stretching from the Allegheny Mountains of Virginia and Pennsylvania to the Mississippi River was claimed by three peoples: the English, the French, and the Indians. And the arguments were these:

England had planted colonies on the Atlantic coast; she said that by a treaty the Iroquois or Six Nations of New York had sold all the country west of the Alleghenies to her provinces of Pennsylvania, Virginia and Maryland. "This," the Six Nations had asserted, "is our empire. We have conquered it. The other Indians living there do so because we permit them."

France said that when her Marquette and LaSalle explored the Mississippi River and claimed it for France, they included the whole country watered by all the rivers flowing into the Mississippi from the east and from the west. This was another large bargain.

The Indians said that the Iroquois had lied; they had

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not owned the lands of the Ohio Valley. These belonged to the tribes living upon them. Let the French stay in Canada; let the English stay east of the mountains; the Indians would keep the Ohio Country.

The French were more popular, but the English appeared to be the stronger—and it is Indian policy to side with the stronger party, so as to get the spoils of war. Therefore when in the summer of 1749 the Wyandots, the Shawnees, the Delawares, the Mingos (who were roving bands of Iroquois), saw a large detachment of French soldiers descending along the River Ohio, burying leaden plates at the mouths of the streams, tacking the arms of France to the trees, and warning English traders to leave at once, they sent messages to the governors of Pennsylvania, New York and Virginia.

“The French mean to steal the country from us. We ask our brothers the English for protection.”

At this time there were no white settlements west of the Allegheny Mountains, but the province of Virginia was supposed to extend westward even to the Mississippi. At least, it reached to the Ohio River and included southwestern Pennsylvania. In reply to the Indians, Governor James Hamilton of Pennsylvania dispatched Trader George Croghan, with presents and treaty talk. To spy out a tract for settlement near the Ohio and to encourage the Indians with friendship words, the Ohio Company of Virginia dispatched the pioneer surveyor Christopher Gist of the Yadkin River, North Carolina.

The Ohio Company had been formed by Lawrence

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## WASHINGTON STANDS FAST (1754)

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and Augustine Washington (George Washington's elder brothers), several other Virginia and Maryland planters, and Merchant John Hanbury of London, to settle five hundred thousand acres of land granted them by the king of England, at the Ohio River west of the mountains.

Trader Croghan and Surveyor Gist left, the one from the north, the other from the south, in the same month, October, 1750.

They traveled, sometimes meeting, clear into western Ohio. The Indians received them well indeed; there were councils and feasts; the Miamis of Pickawillanee town in western Ohio refused some French whiskey and tobacco, and sent four French Ottawas home weeping with sorrow. All the tribes promised to attend a great council to be held at Logstown, beside the Ohio River fourteen miles below the "forks" where the Monongahela and Allegheny Rivers join to form the Ohio.

Logstown was the town of old Half-King Tanacharison, chief of the Mingo Senecas. He was called the half-king because the people whom he ruled were subjects of the head chief of the Six Nations.

The treaty council was held with the Ohio Country Indians at Logstown. The Six Nations themselves did not come. They haughtily announced:

"It is not our custom to meet to treat of business in the woods and weeds. If the governor of Virginia wishes to speak with us, we will meet him at Albany."

The Ohio Indians signed a paper by which they agreed not to bother any English settlers on the east side of the Ohio River. Still, they began to have fears.

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## BOYS' BOOK OF BORDER BATTLES

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They did not wish any white settlers at all. When Christopher Gist again came to the Ohio, to survey for the Ohio Company's land in northwestern Virginia, the Delawares objected.

"The French claim all the land on one side of the river, the English claim all the land on the other side. Now, tell us, where does the Indians' land lie?"

That was true.

Old Chief Tanacharison himself hastened north to the French fort at Lake Erie.

"Both you and the English are white," he said to the French commandant. "The land belongs to neither of you. We desire you and the English to withdraw."

The French commandant laughed at him.

"Child, you talk foolishly. There is not so much as the black of your nail yours. It is my land; and down the river I will go and build upon it."

So back went Chief Tanacharison, much alarmed.

The French descended into the Ohio Country. They destroyed Pickawillanee town of the Miami league; its head chief, a Piankasha, was killed and eaten by the Ottawas. Twelve hundred French from Montreal marched south to occupy the Valley of the Ohio. A chain of sixty forts was to be built, that should extend from Montreal to New Orleans.

The Indians were aroused in earnest. The English seemed their only help. Wampum speech-belts and other messages flowed in to the governors of New York, Pennsylvania and Virginia.

"I am left a poor lonely woman, with one son," ap-

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## WASHINGTON STANDS FAST (1754)

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pealed the widow of the Piankasha chief of the Miami league—the chief who had been eaten by the Ottawas of the French. “I pray the English, the Six Nations, the Shawnees and the Delawares to take care of him.”

And Half-King Tanacharison urged:

“We see that the French plan to cheat us out of our lands. They make only mischief; they have struck our friends the Miamis. We wish our brothers of Virginia to build a strong house at the forks of the Ohio.”

Accordingly the Ohio Company engaged the best man known to them, to go into the region, warn the French to keep out, learn the location of their forts, and enlist the Indians for the English.

This man was young George Washington, aged only twenty-one, but already a major in the Virginia militia and a public surveyor. He selected for his guide Christopher Gist. With a little party of seven men he set out a horse in the month of November, 1753.

At the Forks of the Ohio he stopped to visit old Shingis, chief of the Delawares. Today the city of Pittsburgh covers that ground, and more. Major Washington noted the spot as an especially fine site for a fort.

He turned down river to talk with the friendly half-king, Tanacharison. With Tanacharison, Chief Jeskake, and Chief White Thunder, who was the keeper of the Shawnee speech-belts, he rode into the north, to talk with the French.

But although he made a winter journey of four hundred miles, to Fort Le Boeuf in northern Ohio, the new headquarters of the French commandant, he got little



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## BOYS' BOOK OF BORDER BATTLES

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satisfaction. The French seemed determined to stay, and were working hard to bribe the Indians.

One satisfaction he did get: that he had done thoroughly and had shirked not at all. Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia at once sent men in, to build a fort upon the Ohio Company's lands at the Forks of the Ohio. Major Washington was appointed lieutenant-colonel—he might have been colonel, but he thought himself too young—and in April, 1754, started with about one hundred and fifty militia to garrison the new fort and hold it until reinforcements arrived.

Part way he learned that he was too late. The French had come down, led by Captain Contrecoeur; on April 27 they had captured the half-finished fort and its small guard. They were staying there and completing it as a fort of their own. They named the fort Duquesne (pronounced Ducane) in honor of the French commander-in-chief in America, the Marquis du Quesne, governor-general of Canada.

Half-King Tanacharison, who had been with the Americans at the fort, sent a message to his friend Washington.

"Come to our assistance as soon as you can; come soon or we are lost and shall never meet again. I speak it in the grief of my heart."

Lieutenant-Colonel Washington did not know exactly what to do. The French were reported to number one thousand, with artillery; other troops were on the way; Indians were joining; he himself was one hundred miles from the settlements, with a small detachment of raw militia, and his instructions were to make a road

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## WASHINGTON STANDS FAST (1754)

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to the Monongahela, for wagons and artillery. Nothing had been said about fighting.

To bring on a war between two nations is a serious matter. Besides, he was only a young "provincial," without field experience in military methods; and the French force was composed largely of trained soldiers under skilled officers. But the French certainly had committed an act of war first, by seizing the fort, and he must do something at once or he would lose the friendly Indians. He thought it out in his tent during a rainy night, and decided. He would push right on as far as he could, meet the Indians, build a fort of his own in the disputed territory, and if need be, wait.

So he sent the news back to Virginia, and asked that reinforcements be hurried to him. He returned one of the Indian runners to Chief Tanacharison, with good word; ordered sixty men forward to open the trail; and followed with one hundred and sixty others.

He soon caught up with the road cutters. They all hewed their way across the Allegheny Mountains, through the place named the Vale of Death by reason of its gloomy timber, and emerged into Little Meadows. They had been eleven days in coming twenty-five miles.

As they toiled on, the outlook darkened. Traders said that the Indians were rising in favor of the victorious French. Pennsylvania declined to furnish aid. Virginia and Maryland were tardy—the pay of the militia officers had been made less than that of the king's regulars, their rations were mainly salt pork and water, and few cared to serve for this, in a wilderness campaign.

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## BOYS' BOOK OF BORDER BATTLES

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Washington himself said that he would rather serve without pay and for honor only—or else earn the day wages of a laborer. But he added: “I am determined not to leave the regiment, but to be among the last men to leave the Ohio.”

One bright spot there was: the half-king had started with fifty warriors to meet him.

On May 23, while he was advancing, Indian scouts told him that the French above were eight hundred, and divided into two parties. Next, Chief Tanacharison sent the word:

“The French army is coming. Be on your guard against them, my brethren, for they intend to strike the first English they shall see. I and the rest of the chiefs will be with you in five days.”

That same evening he heard that the French were only eighteen miles away. He made haste to the Great Meadows, which is near the southern border of southwestern Pennsylvania, some seventy miles south of Pittsburg, cleared the brush, and entrenched.

“A ‘charming’ place for an encounter,” he thought it. There was no retreat in the mind of George Washington, aged twenty-two. Christopher Gist, who had a trading house in the vicinity, also brought news, that the French were within five miles, and advised him to retire. But Washington said that it was not the time; he would be ambushed. Old Captain Jacob Van Braam, who had been a soldier in Holland and had taught him fencing and tactics and was his most experienced officer, agreed that it would not be very safe to retire far.

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## WASHINGTON STANDS FAST (1754)

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This was a night of alarms. The dense forest surrounded blackly, and who knew what the French and Indians might be doing in it? Washington decided not to wait for attack. That would give the enemy the advantage. The longer he waited, the more restless his men would get, and the French would grow stronger. He acted on his own judgment—which, he afterward declared, was usually the better way for him, in warfare. When word arrived that the half-king was encamped six miles distant, and that his scouts were in touch with the French, inside of an hour he detailed forty men (his best shots), took no gun but tucked an extra pair of moccasins in his belt, and had set out at ten o'clock in the pitchy, rainy night of May 27, to find Chief Tanacharison, and the French.

They were all the night in reaching the half-king's camp. Yes, Tanacharison would help him. So would Scarouady, the second chief. So would the warriors. Tanacharison showed him the trail made by the French. Two warriors were put upon it; followed it like hounds, and came back to report that they had found the French encamped in a bottom amidst rocks and trees, with a few cabins as shelter from the pouring rain.

Now young George Washington was all enthusiasm. It was to be his first battle; he was to strike the enemy, as a soldier of Virginia and the king. He reviewed in his mind everything that he had been told by old Van Braam, and by other military men. He took counsel with Tanacharison and Scarouady. When the arrangements had been made for a surprise attack, and

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he understood the nature of the ground, cautioning his forty to keep their priming dry he led them by the right flank, through the dripping woods; Tanacharison and Scarouady led their warriors by the left flank.

The surprise was perfect. The French suspected nothing until on a sudden they witnessed Washington at the head of his half company issuing into the edge of the bottom land. He deployed his men among the rocks and trees. The French sprang for their guns.

"Fire!" Washington ordered. The flintlocks spoke briskly; the French soldiers replied in kind. The Americans had been seen first; the French paid no attention to the Indians, who stayed concealed. Washington did not seek cover; he was the commander. Balls whistled close around him; a man was killed at his side. He rather enjoyed the sensation of danger. He wrote to his brother John:

"I heard the bullets whistle, and, believe me, there is something charming in the sound."

"He would not say so if he had been used to hear many," King George of England remarked.

But during the next twenty-five years Washington did hear a great many bullets, and he never was seen to shrink.

The French resisted only fifteen minutes; their captain, Jumonville, had been killed at the first volley; nine others were killed, and one wounded. The remainder broke and ran, but twenty-one were captured and only one escaped to bear the news to Fort Duquesne.

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## WASHINGTON STANDS FAST (1754)

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So George Washington had won his first victory, by his own plans. He had acted quickly. The Jumonville detachment had been scouting for him, to locate his camp for Captain Contrecoeur at Fort Duquesne. If he had delayed, fearing to venture out, he would have been besieged by a large force. The surrender of the Ohio Company's post at the forks had now been avenged; but the shots fired in this little battle were the opening shots of a ten years' war known in history as the French and Indian War.

The French and Indian War, thus set aflame by Washington, resulted in military rule in America by the British army, to protect British interests, and in much unpleasantness; then followed the Revolution, with George Washington again as the leader.

After the battle, however, he saw himself in a fix once more. He forwarded his prisoners to Virginia under a strong guard. Tanacharison's warriors scalped the dead French (they wished to scalp the wounded man and the prisoners too, but were not allowed) and sent the scalps, with black wampum and red hatchets, to the Mingos, the Shawnees and the Miamis, as sign that "their brothers, the English, had begun in earnest." The half-king left, promising to return with forty warriors and their families. But nevertheless Washington was in a tight place. The French from Fort Duquesne would surely come down, and they might come in a hurry.

He could not retreat, or he would lose the support of the Indians; and he didn't like the idea of retreating, anyway. If he could stick it out until the arrival of

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## BOYS' BOOK OF BORDER BATTLES

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reinforcements, white and red, he might be all right.

He commenced the erection of a palisade fort in the center of the Great Meadows, which was a grassy level two hundred and fifty yards wide, in the midst of wooded hills. The rains fell, provisions ran low, and for six days his men were without flour. Then Tanacharison and Scarouady and the forty warriors, bringing their women and children marched in; they had to be fed, also. On account of the short rations Washington named the fort Fort Necessity.

He waited in vain for other Indian allies: Shawnees, Mingos, the Miamis from western Ohio. None came. One hundred and fifty militia from Virginia, who had started behind him, a month before, finally appeared; and there was an independent company from North Carolina.

The independent company brought only trouble. They said that they were not militia; they had enlisted as "king's men"; their officers held royal commissions and were superior to militia officers; as a militia colonel Washington had no authority over them. Therefore the North Carolina independents would not work; they would fight, when the time came, but building forts and cutting roads was not, they considered, the proper job for "king's men."

Washington had expected every hour to be attacked by odds of maybe five to one. Naturally, the French would be rallying, and it looked as though they were winning the Indians. He had written to Governor Dinwiddie:

"Your honor may depend I will not be surprised, let

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## WASHINGTON STANDS FAST (1754)

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them come at what hour they will. I doubt not if you hear I am beaten; but you will hear at the same time that we have done our duty in fighting as long as there is a shadow of hope."

Meanwhile Fort Duquesne was in a state of excitement, also. The one Canadian who had escaped from the cabins had told the story. Among the officers at Duquesne there was the captain De Villiers, brother-in-law of the Jumonville who had been killed. He was hot for revenge. Captain Contrecoeur delayed only for more troops. He had five hundred, but nine hundred were on the way, and the Indians who favored the French were promising to help him.

The last of June De Villiers started, with five hundred soldiers and one hundred Indians. Washington was employing his Virginians in cutting a military road; for he had been sent in to open roads. Besides, work is good, when soldiers are idle. Tanacharison himself was growing restless. His warriors were anxious to fight; they could not understand why the white soldiers stayed in one spot. 'The French ought to be struck again—scalps taken.

The North Carolinians had been left to guard Fort Necessity. While Washington and his Virginians were laboring in the forest, miles from the fort, they learned that the French were advancing upon them. Back they rushed, to the fort; and when they arrived they were completely worn out.

Nevertheless they plunged into the work of strengthening the walls of the fort with logs, and with trenches, while the Carolinian "independents" looked on.



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## BOYS' BOOK OF BORDER BATTLES

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Washington himself toiled like any private. But old Tanacharison feared being caught in a trap. He considered that the Meadows was a poor place for defence, and that the fort did not amount to much. Why should time have been wasted in building roads?

"The French are cowards," he said; "the English are fools. Washington is a good man, but he lacks experience. He lies in one place from one full moon to another, without making any fortification except this little thing in the Meadow. He will not take the Indians' advice. So I think best to remove my wife and children to a safer place."

That he did, and most of his warriors followed him.

This left Washington with his three hundred and two exhausted Virginian militia, and the one hundred proud North Carolinians; all in a make-shift log fort, commanded by the timbered hill, and drenched by the constant rain.

Just after dawn of July 3 a sentry staggered in, wounded, from his outpost at the hills.

"The French and Indians!" he gasped. "A redskin shot me."

The drummers beat the alarm. The woods seemed quiet. Washington ordered scouts out, and formed his men in the open, to receive the attack. The scouts returned. They had sighted a large body of French and Indians only four miles distant, and coming on rapidly.

Washington waited. Nothing more occurred, until noon. Then shots were fired at the men, from amidst the trees of a hill. Scarcely a sign of the enemy, except the gun puffs, could be seen; but the firing increased,

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## WASHINGTON STANDS FAST (1754)

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the bullets pelted in, nearer and nearer; and at last the helpless Americans were obliged to retire into the little breastworks.

Soon the French and Indians had invested all the hills commanding the fort. The battle was fought in the rain. The trenches filled with water, the men's muskets missed fire, in the woods the enemy were sheltered.

The fort had no roof; presently bullets from the tree tops began to hiss in over the breastworks; that was bad. Washington's men were falling; and as far as known, no damage had been done to the besiegers. Tanacharison was right: the fort was poorly located and poorly constructed; but there had been no better place.

At dark twelve Virginians had been killed and forty-eight wounded, out of the three hundred; the North Carolinians likewise had suffered severely. The French commander, De Villiers, sent in a flag of truce, with proposal for a parley. Washington refused it. He was almost out of provisions and of ammunition, but he did not intend to give up easily.

About eight o'clock there came a second request. This time he agreed to talk. He appointed old Captain Van Braam, the Hollander, who spoke a smattering of French, to talk for him. The French seemed to want everything, and it was not until eleven o'clock that Washington gained his point: the privilege of marching out with his men, colors flying, drums beating, and with all his supplies except the few cannon. These were to be destroyed.

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## BOYS' BOOK OF BORDER BATTLES

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This was bitter enough; but he had done as he had engaged to do. He had upheld the honor of his uniform to the end, and he had been "among the last men that leave the Ohio."

As for Chief Tanacharison, this fall he died. He claimed that the French had put an evil spell upon him for having beaten them, with his warriors, at the surprise attack in the cabins bottoms. He never granted Washington much credit; but his warriors remained very bitter toward the French.

The flag of France floated triumphant in the Ohio Valley. The Indians were disgusted. At Albany the Six Nations made reply to the defence convention of the colonies.

"Look at the French; they are men; they are fortifying everywhere. But, we are ashamed to say it, you are like women, without any fortifications. It is but one step from Canada hither; and the French may easily come and turn you out of doors."

The American colonies seemed unable to unite with men and funds, for a campaign. When England saw this, and heard what had befallen that "young hot-headed," Washington, she prepared to send regular troops over and drive the French out.

## CHAPTER II

### ON BRADDOCK'S BLOODY FIELD (1755)

#### WHERE WASHINGTON WON HIS SPURS

**I**N September, this 1754, Colonel and Brigadier General Sir Edward Braddock was appointed by King George II major-general in command of all the British forces in America. He was directed to sail with two regiments of Regulars, to drive the French from the Ohio Country. The Provincials or colonial militia appeared to be worthless. British Regulars would soon do the business.

Sir Edward had been born into the British army. His father had been lieutenant-colonel of the famous Coldstream Guards, one of the crack regiments of old England. He himself had been an ensign of the Guards at fifteen, at twenty-one a lieutenant, at forty a captain, at forty-seven lieutenant-colonel; next, colonel of the Forty-fourth Foot and brigadier general of the line. Through all these years he had fought upon many fields.

Now in 1754 he was a burly, broad-shouldered, six-foot veteran of sixty years, with a reputation as a drill-master, a swordsman, and a hard-bitted soldier. He was short-tempered and obstinate, and brave. Everybody in the army knew "Charley" Braddock.

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If anyone could make quick work of the French, he was the man; and he would speedily discipline the provincial militia, also. His own regiment, the Forty-fourth, was the best drilled regiment in England.

In the late winter he set sail with his staff of officers and a company or two as guard. The two regiments chosen were the Forty-fourth, commanded by Colonel Sir Peter Halket the Scotchman, and the Forty-eighth, commanded by Colonel Thomas Dunbar.

It was February 20 when General Braddock arrived in Hampton Roads of Chesapeake Bay; he made his headquarters at Alexandria, up the Potomac and only a few miles from Mt. Vernon, the home of Colonel Washington. Here at Alexandria the troops were landed at last, in March. They were a fine sight, those gold-laced British officers in the king's scarlet, and those stiff, red-coated, peak-hatted British grenadiers.

Washington longed to join the expedition, in order to learn Regular army methods and to help clean out the French intruders; but the officers of the British Regulars ranked the officers of the provinces, and he feared that he would not be given the chance to show what he could do. General Braddock heard good word of this young "provincial" colonel; he directed his aide, Captain Robert Orme, to invite Colonel Washington to join as a member of the staff with rank of captain in the British army.

The letter of invitation, marked "On his Majesty's service with speed," was welcomed. George Washington gladly accepted. He and the other young aides-de-camp, Captains Orme and Morris, and the general's

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military secretary, Captain Shirley, became great friends.

General Braddock was a long time in getting started. He had to wait for supplies and recruits and militia. Meanwhile he fumed and fretted. The French were hurrying troops across the ocean to America, Fort Duquesne was likely to be reinforced. But he never lost confidence.

He moved headquarters to Frederick, farther inland, in Maryland. Here he met the great and benign Benjamin Franklin.

"I shall take Fort Duquesne by the first of June," he said, to Benjamin Franklin. "Duquesne can hardly detain me more than three or four days; and then I can see nothing that can obstruct my march to Niagara."

"It will require a very long line, perhaps four miles, to march by a narrow road through the forest and over the mountains," Franklin the wise thought to himself. So he ventured to say: "To be sure, if you arrive safely before Duquesne with these fine troops and your artillery, it can probably make only a short resistance. But the Indians are very skillful in laying ambuscades; and the slender line that your march must form may expose it to attack that will cut it into pieces like a thread."

General Braddock smiled.

"These savages may indeed be a formidable enemy to your raw American militia," he declared proudly; "but upon the king's regular and disciplined troops, sir, it is impossible that they should make an impression."

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And again he was heard to say:

"In my opinion, sirs, our principal task will be to march up the hills and come down again."

The actual start was to be made from the Ohio Company's supply post of Fort Cumberland, at the mouth of Will's Creek up the Potomac River. From here stretched the Indian trail to the Monongahela River—the trail that Christopher Gist and Washington had followed when they went in, across the Allegheny Mountains.

On the road to Fort Cumberland (and a very bad road it was, too, through the wilderness) General Braddock passed his troops. He had bought a red state carriage from Governor Sharpe of Maryland; and now he posted at full speed, well jounced, and flanked by his galloping aides-de-camp and a light-horse guard. The drums and fies received him with the Grenadier's March; seventeen cannon saluted him at Cumberland. But by this time he had had enough of such travel. He changed his mind about going on to Duquesne in a crimson coach. Horse and saddle were better suited to this kind of a country.

The troops had been twenty-seven days in marching some one hundred miles through timber and brush and over the Blue Ridge Mountains. They were footsore and weary. Evidently a tough campaign lay before; to get wagons and artillery farther looked to be a task indeed. Ensign Allen of the regulars, appointed to drill the militia, had his hands full. General Braddock decided that the Americans never would amount to

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much as soldiers; and he made no bones about saying so.

On the contrary, Captain Washington and others rather believed that when it came to fighting Indians in the forest the "raw" Americans would give a good account of themselves. Drilling in massed formations, every man as stiff as a poker, was a poor way to prepare for woods fighting. Still, there had to be discipline.

When by June 7 General Braddock was ready to march, he had all told about twenty-two hundred men.

There were the two regiments of British grenadiers, each recruited up to seven hundred; there was a company of Virginia light horse, commanded by Captain Stewart; there were two half companies of New York volunteers; there were some thirty British sailors, to help with the tackle for dragging the cannon; there were two companies of sixty pioneers or road makers; there were Scouts George Croghan and Christopher Gist; there were only eight Indians, under Chief Scarouady, who was now half-king, since old Tanacharison's death last fall; and there were many women, for laundresses and so forth.

Scout Captain Croghan had received word that on the march the celebrated Captain Jack and his band of forest rangers would join. This Captain Patrick Jack of the Pennsylvania border was known as "Black Hunter," "Black Rifle," and the "Wild Hunter of the Juniata." He had lost his whole family, by the Indians. Now he and his band did nothing but hunt for



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scalps. His very name spread far from the Lakes to the Ohio.

The Braddock army contained a number of men famous in American history. George Washington, aged twenty-seven, was an aide-de-camp. Horatio Gates, who as American general in the Revolution accepted the surrender of General Burgoyne at Saratoga in 1777, was captain (ranking as major) of one of the New York companies. Daniel Morgan, the gallant leader of the American riflemen in the Revolution, was a wagonner. Among the other Virginians there were several who would fight the Chief Cornstalk warriors at the great battle of Point Pleasant, in 1774.<sup>1</sup>

As lieutenant-colonel of the Forty-fourth Foot there was Thomas Gage, who became Colonial governor of Massachusetts and commander-in-chief of the British forces in North America; and who while stationed in Boston in 1775 ordered the assault on Bunker Hill. His colonel, ranking next to General Braddock himself, was Sir Peter Halket, a doughty old Scotchman, brave through and through, and with good sense enough to fight in the Indian way, were he only permitted to.

From Fort Cumberland it was about one hundred and twenty-five miles by trail to the Forks of the Ohio and Fort Duquesne. A road had to be opened, every inch of the way; trees had to be cut, streams bridged, bogs filled, for the wagons and the artillery.

If Captain Washington, Captain Croghan and Christopher Gist might have managed matters, they would

<sup>1</sup> See "Boys' Book of Indian Warriors."

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have left the baggage wagons and gone in with only pack horses.

"Blankets, an ax, a rifle and ammunition are enough for the men," Captain Croghan the scout and trader asserted. "Why, here are hundreds of wagons, and gimcracks and nonsense to fit out a town, and all the officers of foot on horseback! I should like to give those fellows a woods drill," he added, "and upset half their rum kegs."

But General Braddock could not understand.

"We," Captain Washington sighed, "shall have more to do, I foresee, than to march up the hills and come down."

They were ten days in crossing the mountains and arriving at Little Meadows, only twenty-five miles. And here the soldiers were again so worn out that a week's camp was necessary. Those British Regulars, in their tall pointed leather hats, their tight red coats, their leather leggins, their cross belts and knapsacks, carrying their ammunition boxes, their mess kits, their heavy muskets, never had dreamed of such marches. How dense the forests were! How immense the trees, how silent the vast reaches of country, how steep the hills, how dark the nights, and the shadows brooding in the timbered aisles! And the names—the Great Savage Mountain, the vale of the Shades of Death!

Never an Indian joined the column, never a soul greeted it as it struggled on and on in a line sometimes three miles long, with files of sweating red-coats tugging at the wheels.

On the western side George Croghan brought the

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noted Captain Jack the Black Rifle to General Braddock's tent. Black Rifle had turned up, as promised, with fifty border scouts—Indian slayers, every one. He was six feet three inches tall, as thin as a bean pole, as swarthy as an Indian, and never smiled.

General Braddock bade him wait, and they would talk later; but said shortly:

"I require no more undrilled men. I have experienced troops on whom I can completely rely."

Whereupon, with scarcely a word, the indignant Black Rifle led his men away: clad in their buckskins and moccasins, bearing their long flintlocks at a trail, they vanished, one after the other, into the forest, and were not seen again by the Braddock army.

By this time General Braddock had been convinced of the roughness of the country. At the rate he was traveling he would be weeks in getting to Fort Duquesne, and would be too late to head off the reinforcements. So now he sought Washington's advice. He decided to lighten his column. He chose a detachment of a thousand of the best grenadiers from the two regular regiments, added for good measure the Virginian riflemen, and Captain Gates' company of New Yorkers; and with twelve hundred men, pack-horses, thirty ammunition wagons, eight cannon and twelve hand-mortars he pushed on. This was June 19. He left Colonel Dunbar, of the Forty-eighth to bring the remainder of the men and the heavy baggage. Colonel Dunbar did not like that duty.

At Fort Duquesne, one hundred miles northwest, Captain Contrecoeur already was well posted. He

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knew that the enemy was coming. His Indian spies had been watching the march from Cumberland. They were at first astonished, then amused. They noted the long line and the slow methods; and they said:

"The English general and his soldiers are fools. We will shoot them all like one pigeon, when the time comes."

But Captain Contrecoeur feared. His spies reported that the English army numbered at least four thousand. He himself had in the fort only a small company of French regulars, and about one hundred and fifty Canadian militia. Their officers were the young Chevalier de Beaujeu, Lieutenants Dumas, de Ligneris, and Captain Charles de Langlade, a famed half-breed ranger. Outside the walls six hundred Indian allies were encamped. They were mainly Ottawas, Ojibwas and Chippewas, from the Lakes, but they included Shawnees, Hurons, Delawares and others of the Ohio Valley, who had taken up sides with the French. Their chiefs were Pontiac of the Ottawas, old Shingis of the Delawares, the Ottawa Nissowaquet whose sister had married Ranger de Langlade, Athanasa the Huron, Beaver; among the fiercest of the warriors was the young Shawnee brave, Catahecassa or Black Hoof, who as a chief in 1779 took part in the great Indian attack upon Daniel Boone's fort of Boonesborough.<sup>1</sup>

When Captain Contrecoeur learned that a British major-general was bringing four thousand men, and much artillery, and was leveling the forest as he approached, he planned to surrender. Fort Duquesne,

<sup>1</sup> See "Boys' Book of Frontier Fighters."

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built of logs and dirt-roofed, was not proof against cannon-balls. Neither were his Indians. They likely would run in fright from the terrific noise.

Then on July 8, when the Braddock column was within only fifteen miles of the fort, the spirited young Lieutenant de Beaujeu went to Captain Contrecoeur and said, saluting:

"I ask permission to go to meet the English and surprise them on their way, while they are crossing the Monongahela."

"That would be a madman's act, my son," Captain Contrecoeur objected wisely. "We are too few. We cannot depend upon the Indians. Had our reinforcements arrived—. But now—" and he shrugged his shoulders—"we must accept the fortunes of war."

Lientenant de Beaujeu pleaded eagerly.

"I pray you let me strike a blow for France. By surprising their advance we may throw them into confusion; but if we let our Indians disperse without scalps, our cause will be lost in the Ohio Country."

"You may go, then, in the name of France," Captain Contrecoeur yielded. "That is, if you can get volunteers. I shall issue no orders. The deed shall be yours."

Lientenant de Beaujeu (he was scarcely more than a boy) joyfully hastened out. The French and the Canadians volunteered, every man. With the Indians it was different.

"We are in all only eight hundred men, and you ask us to attack four thousand, with cannon and horses? You have no sense."

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De Beaujeu spoke again, urging; Charles de Langlade the white Indian spoke, in the Ottawa tongue, with words of fire and scorn.

"We will sleep upon your plan and talk further in the morning," the chiefs answered.

Early in the morning they refused to go. Lieutenant de Beaujeu sprang to the gateway of the fort.

"Then I shall go out, myself, against the enemy!" he cried. "Will you suffer your father to go alone to victory?"

This stung.

"No, no!" they cheered. "Lead us. We are not women. Lead us to strike the enemy."

So barrels of gun-powder and casks of flints and bullets were opened outside the gates; the Indians thronged to help themselves; at the head of seventy French Regulars, one hundred and fifty Canadians and six hundred and forty of Pontiac's warriors, the slender Lieutenant de Beaujeu sallied into the forest.

General Braddock had been coming indeed, with the advance column, at the rate of two to four miles a day—"moving along as solemn as a box-turtle," Christopher Gist said; "for any smart turtle ought to travel two miles in a day."

"We must needs stop to bridge every brook and level every mole-hill," Captain Washington criticized.

Better speed seemed impossible. The pioneers of Lieutenant-Colonel Sir John St. Clair, felling trees and grading hills and bridging streams were constantly blocking the way. The grenadiers were lame of foot, and pestered by ticks and mosquitoes; during the day

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they sweat in their thick woolen uniforms; during the night they shivered with the dampness. There were alarms; Indian spies lurked close, killed the stragglers, stole the loose horses, until in every moving shadow the eye saw an enemy, and every rustle in the brush was an attack.

June 24, after a week's march General Braddock was only at Great Meadows, twenty-five miles from Little Meadows and seventy from Fort Duquesne. He himself was in good spirits and was determined, but Captain Washington had been taken ill and placed in a wagon at the rear. The general had promised him, though, that there should be no battle without him.

Recent Indian camps were passed; the Indians and the French had left boastful threats printed upon smoothed tree trunks. The soldiers were ordered not to fire their guns to clean them of damp powder, but to draw the loads frequently and put in fresh ones.

July 4 the column was at Thicketty Run, about thirty miles from Duquesne, and was short of supplies.

On July 8, when Lieutenant de Beaujeu was pleading with his captain and with Pontiac's Indians, it was nearing the Monongahela River, and this evening encamped two miles from the banks, or fifteen miles from Fort Duquesne.

The supplies from Colonel Dunbar's train, forty miles behind, finally caught up; and with them, Captain Washington, pale and weak but bound to be present for the attack on Fort Duquesne.

"I would not miss it for five hundred pounds," he had written to his brother Augustine.

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Scarouady had been captured and had been found tied to a tree, but unharmed. Christopher Gist, scouting in the advance, had had a narrow squeak. And now some panicky grenadiers fired upon their own Indians and killed Chief Scarouady's son. General Braddock ordered a military funeral, with volleys over the grave. This healed the chief's heart.

Beyond the camp the Monongahela formed a bend. General Braddock planned to cross by a ford to the western bank, then by a march of five miles northward recross to the eastern side—the same side as Fort Duquesne, which was located in the angle where the Monongahela from the south and the Allegheny from the north joined to make the Ohio.

The land between the two fords was a beautiful high plateau or stretch of bluffs, bordering the river, and easily climbed from the first ford. This should be the line of march. Orders were issued for "parade dress." General Braddock wished every man to appear in pipe-clay and stiffened queues and spick and span uniform with buttons polished. No doubt the French and Indians would watch the crossing and he desired to show them the sight of a real British army.

Washington was of different mind. He announced that he should change his British uniform of scarlet for a plain-colored buckskin shirt, like those of the rangers; and he advised his fellow officers to do the same. They laughed at him; said that it was unworthy of a soldier, and would look like fear. But he did change, in the morning; and afterwards believed that this saved his life.



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He also ventured to advise General Braddock that the Virginians be sent to the fore, under himself, to clear the way from ambuscades. General Braddock angered.

"High times!" he growled. "High times, when a young Buckskin can teach a British general how to fight!"

The next morning the Virginians were put in the rear.

General Braddock proposed to cross the two fords, encamp not far from the fort, and on the morning after demand its surrender. Until late this night the grenadiers were busy, by firelight, whitening their cross-belts with pipe-clay, soaping their queues or pig-tails, polishing their buttons and muskets and scouring their uniforms. Back in Philadelphia the citizens were collecting funds with which to celebrate the capture of Fort Duquesne.

"I think that it would be better to raise the money after the victory is accomplished," Benjamin Franklin said.

At three in the morning, July 9, 1755, the advance guard, three hundred regulars and Captain Horatio Gates' company of New Yorkers, under Lieutenant-Colonel Gates, marched out to secure the fords. At four o'clock the pioneers, two hundred and fifty ax-men, with two six-pounder cannon, followed. At six o'clock the drums and fifes sounded the "general," and the main detachment of regulars and Virginians commanded by Sir Peter Halket started.

With the rest of the staff Captain Washington

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watched the crossing of the first ford. A brave sight it was—the finest sight, he afterwards declared, that he ever saw: the solid ranks of brightly red-coated white-belted British Regulars, stiffly erect under their tall peaked hats, with bayonets flashing and muskets gleaming, flags flying and the fifes and drums playing the “Grenadier’s March,” while all in step they splashed through the water and wound up the slope to the bluffs; his own blue-coated Virginians, afoot and ahorse both; the wagonners driving their teams, the creaking artillery, the camp-followers—everyone gay at the thought of victory. Well might General Braddock be proud. He had his faults, but he was a thorough soldier.

When the second ford had been crossed without attack, officers and men might breathe easier. Evidently the French were not coming out. Fort Duquesne lay scarcely ten miles before, but could not be seen on account of a range of hills. Now it was past one o’clock, of a warm and sunny day. Sir Peter Halket marched his detachment into the first bottom, and halt was made by all for dinner.

“Reform your column, sir,” were General Braddock’s orders. “Gage will hold the advance, and clear the way for the pioneers. You will proceed until three o’clock; then halt for camp.”

Lieutenant-Colonel Gage moved again, to clear the trail with two companies of regulars, and a smattering of light-horse videttes. Captain Henry Gordon, of the Royal Engineers, three Indian guides and six Virginia light-horse men took the fore, to survey the

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trail and mark it for the pioneers of Lieutenant-Colonel St. Clair.

This trail proved to be a rough road about twelve feet wide, opened by the French wood-choppers. From the river-bottom where noon camp had been made it obliqued up a long terraced slope of forest and brush, for the top of a range of hills; from the top Fort Duquesne probably could be seen, among other bluffs to the west, where the Monongahela and the Allegheny Rivers joined.

The three detachments—the Gage advance, the St. Clair ax-men, the main column with baggage train, of Sir Peter Halket—were separated by intervals of only a quarter of a mile. When the Gage party had crossed the second ford it had jumped about thirty Indians, who broke and ran without fighting. But that had been the only token of the enemy. Aside from these, nobody had been seen. The great forest seemed peaceful. The Sir Peter Halket column, leaving the bottom land, might hear the ringing of the axes as the pioneers worked, cleaning the wood road for the wagons and artillery. It was a comforting sound. Otherwise, silence reigned ahead.

The most dangerous post of all was that assigned to Captain Gordon the engineer. He, and his six Virginia horsemen, and his three guides afoot, were in the front, and alone together, cautiously following the sun-flecked twelve-foot trail hedged by timber and undergrowth.

About two o'clock, before the top of the hills had been reached, and Fort Duquesne was still some eight miles

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distant, they had arrived at a second terrace, above the first. The main range of timbered hills awaited them directly before. On a sudden Captain Gordon witnessed an astounding spectacle. Down upon him, in the trail through the forest aisles, there came afoot, bounding like a deer, a slender white man clad in a richly fringed hunting shirt, with an officer's silver gorget or small metal plate, crescent shaped, dangling on his breast. Behind him there ran like a pack of wolves a host of dark, painted Indians.

"The French! Indians!" Captain Gordon shouted.

But stopping short the slim young officer had waved his hat; without a sound the Indian pack darted right and left and instantly vanished into the fallen timber, the grape-vines and the brush and grass. The Gage advance was close upon the heels of the scouting party. A moment more, and a crashing volley belched from the very ground on either side—from the slope of a ridge on the right, and from ravines on the left. Three-fourths of the first company of grenadiers were mowed low like ripened grain.

The videttes and flankers had not been thrown out far enough, in such a country. The ravines had not been noted. Now the forest had awakened. The slim figure wearing the silver gorget was the brave young Chevalier de Beaujeu, leading his French and Indians. He was too late to attack at the fords; his spies had found the English already there, and prepared. But this place suited. Hot with eagerness he was just in time. The ravines, choked with brush and ten and twelve feet deep, completely hedged the trail at point-

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blank rifle shot—sixty and seventy yards. And the ridge itself could not have been bettered as a vantage point.

Colonel Gage formed his men in vain, and ordered them to charge with the bayonet. They delivered a smashing volley, but they saw nothing at which to charge. The Indian whoops pealed louder and louder, there were cheers of "Vive la France! Vive le roi!" Another volley, a volley of French musketry, lashed the trail. It came from in front. The road was blocked, surrounded. Dismayed and confused, the British regulars stood huddled, glaring through the smoke, and firing, and falling rapidly. The young officer with the silver gorget was rushing hither-thither, dimly seen as he encouraged his shrieking Indians and cheering soldiers.

Driven back foot by foot, the Gage men, gamely fighting, were joined by the St. Clair detachment, hastening up. The six-pounders were wheeled and pointed; their grapeshot hissed into the thickets. Huzzah! The young officer had collapsed, stricken dead; the Indians were bolting from their coverts. Another round, lads; then charge with the bayonet! But a second leader had sprung to the fore. He was Lieutenant Dumas. He rallied the Indians, the firing from the thickets grew hotter; a perfect storm of lead swept the narrow road, the regulars knew not which way to turn.

Colonel Gage ordered a charge on the ridge to the right, from which the firing seemed more severe. Scarcely an enemy was to be sighted; not a platoon

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would obey the command. Captain Gordon was unhorsed and wounded; Gage was wounded; the officers were being picked off; platoons found themselves without leaders; some of the platoons did run forward, a little distance, but when their officers fell the men ran back again.

The column of General Braddock easily heard the uproar. Washington says that he himself could see the powder puffs and the soldiers tumbling. He knew that it was no skirmish, but an attack in force. General Braddock sent his aide, Captain Robert Orme, forward at a gallop, to learn the worst. He returned wounded in the arm, and reported a desperate struggle.

The general ordered Lieutenant-Colonel Burton to take two-thirds of the column and support the advance; he and his staff accompanied. Sir Peter Halket remained to guard the baggage train.

When the support was part way, it met a stream of ax-men and carpenters pouring down from the flat; all the timber above was blue with powder smoke, amidst which Sir John St. Clair was stoutly holding fast but hard beset.

Now another aide spurred back to order up Sir Peter Halket and baggage guard. Arrived on the battle field, General Braddock took command. He, too, directed that the ridge be cleared with the bayonet—the bayonet was the British soldier's weapon. He did not know—nobody among the British or Americans knew—that there were several ravines, all opening diagonally upon the road and sweeping its length. A

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charge to right or left was useless, but a retreat to the river-bottom would have saved the army.

General Braddock, British officer, was not a man to retreat. The traditions of the British army forbade it. And let it be said that no braver man ever wore a uniform. He raged here and there, like a lion, shouting his orders; he had faced bullets before. He ordered the regimental colors to be planted as rallying points. The company officers were told to separate their men into small platoons, and clear the brush with the bayonet.

But as fast as the officers sprang to the front, and waved the men on, they fell. The men themselves were utterly dismayed. They cried out piteously.

"We will fight if we can see anything to shoot at! Where is the enemy?"

So they stood, huddled, shooting at random—even into the tree tops. In ran the Virginian rangers. They understood Indian fighting, and took to the shelter of the tree trunks. The regulars tried to imitate. General Braddock was after them immediately, calling them cowards, and striking them and the rangers with the flat of his sword.

"Out with you! Out!" he raged. "I'll cut down the first soldier, British or American, who dares to skulk behind a cover!"

Washington attempted to reason with him; but no use. A detachment of Virginians, stealing from tree to tree and about to rush a ravine, were killed by a volley from the grenadiers.

The attack had extended on both sides of the road.

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Sir Peter Halket's reserve was engaged. Presently all was lost. The cannon had been abandoned, for the gunners could not serve the pieces. Washington was the only aide, and the only mounted officer left. Four balls had passed through his coat, two horses had been shot from under him. But he seemed to bear a charmed life. The Indians believed this; years afterward an old chief sought him out to tell him.

"On that day I took seventeen fair shots at you, and I ordered my young men to fire upon you. But we saw that the Great Spirit was preserving you, and so we ceased trying."

Washington rather believed that his dull-colored buckskin shirt had made a poor mark in the smoke.

General Braddock was upon his sixth horse. In vain he tried to stay the rout, with commands and with the flat of his sword. The men were crazed by fear. They threw away everything, even their muskets. Captain Orme and Captain Morris were wounded; Captain Shirley, the general's secretary, had been shot dead at his side. Sir Peter Halket had fallen at the head of his regiment; his son, leaping to catch him, had crumpled across his body.

The soldiers were running down the road, "as sheep pursued by dogs." General Braddock at last turned to follow; he could do no more. Then a bullet through his right arm and into his lung toppled him from his saddle. His men ran on, but Washington, the wounded Captain Orme, Captain Stewart of the Virginia Horse, and other officers rallied to him. So did his black body-servant, Bishop.



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They implored the fleeing soldiers to stop and lend a hand. No use. Finally they got hold of a tumbril or two-wheeled cart. They lifted their general into it. Some camp-followers agreed, for a guinea and a bottle of rum each, to drag the cart down the trail, strewn with knapsacks, blankets, muskets, cartridge boxes, uniform coats, hats, what-not.

"No, no! Leave me. Let me die where I fell," General Braddock begged; but of course that was not to be thought of.

The flight already stretched clear across the river. The wagonners at the baggage train had cut their horses loose and were tearing for the Dunbar division, miles behind.

General Braddock continued to issue orders. In the river bend between the two fords Washington managed to gather about one hundred of the soldiers. The general hoped to make a stand here, until Colonel Dunbar should come up. He could not yet credit that all was lost. It was impossible that British Regulars should be beaten by a mob of Indians and a few French.

So Captain Washington was sent upon the back trail to summon Colonel Dunbar. He rode the forty miles through the forest partly by night. He had been gone scarcely an hour when nearly all the one hundred men deserted the camp. They had heard the whoops of the terrible Indians on the other side of the river.

Only the faithful officers and a handful of the Virginians remained. General Braddock consented to fall back again. He was determined to mount a horse, but he could not sit in the saddle. They made a litter

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of his broad crimson sash slung between two poles (the litter of a British officer) and carried him onward in that fashion. The same was done for Aides-de-camp Orme and Morris. Sashes were worn by the officers for that purpose.

The time was six o'clock. The battle had lasted from two until five. Now the shadows of evening were trooping from the hollows and the forest depths. The French and the Indians did not cross the river; they were busy collecting the spoils—they expected a return and an attack. They could hardly believe in the victory. Neither could General Braddock. His mind was filled with plans of advancing with the Dunbar force and winning the battle. He did not know that he was mortally wounded, but the surgeon had told the others.

In the dusk beyond the second ford he was met by Lieutenant-Colonel Gage and eight men, waiting as a guard for him. They all pushed on, through the night, and the next day, and until ten o'clock the next night. No reinforcements had come to meet them. When Washington had arrived at the camp of Lord Dunbar—"Dunbar the Tardy"—he had found it in disorder. The runaway waggoners had arrived ahead of him, with wild cries:

"All is lost! Braddock is killed! We have seen wounded officers borne off the field in bloody sheets. The troops are cut to pieces!"

That had settled matters. The Dunbar waggoners and non-combatants joined the Braddock waggoners. The soldiers refused to go forward. With wagons for

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## BOYS' BOOK OF BORDER BATTLES

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the wounded, and with supplies, guarded by one company, Washington started back. He reached the General Braddock camp this same night, July 11, and reported that the Dunbar column was without discipline and could not be relied upon.

"We shall see," said the general. "I shall rally them and we will take Fort Duquesne."

The Dunbar camp was thirteen miles. The little party hastened at best speed. But Captain Washington's words had been true. The general, now very weak, could do nothing with the soldiers. Colonel Dunbar would not help; he had decided to retreat to Philadelphia, where he would be safe from the Indians.

General Braddock gave up. The camp was moved one day's march, to the same Great Meadows where Washington himself had been obliged to yield, with honors. The general said little more, except that he murmured, again and again: "Who would have thought it?" and toward the last he uttered, hopefully: "We shall better know how to deal with them another time."

He died here at Great Meadows, within one mile of Fort Necessity, in the night of July 13. They buried him before daybreak of July 14, his sword upon his breast. They dug a grave in the road; Washington read the burial service by torch light; no volley was fired; when the grave had been filled in the teams and wagons were driven over it to destroy all sign; the troops followed.

Here General Braddock was left for almost seventy years. In 1823 a gang of laborers, working on the road—by this time a well-traveled road through a

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## ON BRADDOCK'S BLOODY FIELD (1755)

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settled farming country of the thriving United States of America—unearthed some bones, and rusted steel, and fragments of British scarlet and gold. They had found the lonely grave of Major-General Sir Edward Braddock, who on July 9, 1755, in obstinately launching his massed British grenadiers against the French and Indians of old Fort Duquesne had lost, in killed and wounded, sixty-two officers out of eighty-six, and more than seven hundred rank and file.

There still were people who said that if he had listened to the advice of his aide, George Washington, he would not have failed.

As for Fort Duquesne, that had yielded long before the Revolution, also. On November 25, 1758, young General George Washington had marched in, leading an advance column of his Virginians. The French had fled. He renamed it Fort Pitt, in honor of England's great prime minister, Lord Pitt.

He had visited it again, twelve years later, and had seen the settlement of Pittsburgh. And by 1823 the City of Pittsburg had swallowed old Fort Pitt and was creeping toward Braddock's Field.

## CHAPTER III

### THE BATTLE OF THE BLUE LICKS (1782)

#### AND THE DEFEAT OF DANIEL BOONE

**T**HE French and Indian War opened by George Washington and badly continued by General Braddock lasted almost ten years, or until February, 1863. England won possession again of all the country east of the Mississippi River, except New Orleans, and gained Canada as well.

Now the Colonies—Massachusetts, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and the rest—were forbidden by England to occupy the Ohio Valley; it was to be left to the Indian traders and the military. But the British traders and the army officers were not popular among the Indians. They acted harshly and the Indians much preferred the gay, brotherly French. So when at the close of the war the English began to take over the French posts at the Great Lakes of the Canada border, Chief Pontiac the Ottawa started in to seize the Ohio Valley for the French.<sup>1</sup>

He did not succeed. Nevertheless for many years the Indians dreamed of their old free life when the only white men in their lodges were the French.

Of course, the orders from England limiting the

<sup>1</sup> See "Boys' Book of Indian Warriors."

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## BATTLE OF THE BLUE LICKS (1782)

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American settlers to the country east of the Allegheny Mountains could not be enforced. American traders visited the Indians along the Ohio River. One of them, John Findlay of North Carolina, brought back such glowing report of a new land, called Kain-tuck-ee, where no tribes lived, that in 1769 Daniel Boone and a party of explorers went in, to look it over.

By the time that the War of the Revolution blazed up, Kentucky contained a number of fortified settlements. In 1775 there were Harrodsburgh, Logan's Station, and Boonesborough (Daniel Boone's town) in central Kentucky south of the Kentucky River. During the war other settlements were born. Still others had been started in the north, upon the West Virginia border.

Seeing that the Long Knife Americans were edging into the Ohio Valley the Indians—the Shawnees, the Wyandots, the Mingo Iroquois, the War Delawares, the Miamis—sided with England. Something had to be done. There was constant fighting between the red Americans and the white Americans, for the Ohio Country.

The settlements in Kentucky were attacked. The leaders such as Daniel Boone, dark James Harrod the "Lone Long Knife," the noble Benjamin Logan, and their comrade captains, stood fast.

When in the spring of 1782 the Indians learned that the war had ended and that their British father had given up—"had been laid upon his back" by the Americans—they grew desperate indeed. They had helped him, they had killed Americans; and for what good?

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## BOYS' BOOK OF BORDER BATTLES

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The settlements were here, and he himself had done fighting.

The crafty British traders among them asserted that the father across the water had not quit; he was only resting. A peace between the two white nations certainly would be bad for the red nations. If the great king gave up, then the Americans would be free to drive the Indians out of the land. So the time had come to help the British father by striking a great blow.

The Indians agreed. The British Indian agent Captain William Caldwell organized four hundred warriors to march from the principal Shawnee town of Chillicothe, near present Piqua, western Ohio, against the Kentucky settlements.

Alexander McKee and Matthew Elliot, other agents, were Captain Caldwell's aides. Simon Girty, George Girty and James Girty, renegade white Americans living with the Indians, led their bands of Shawnees and Wyandots. There was a detachment of Canadian Rangers from Detroit. It was a strong column, for the Shawnees and Wyandots sent their best.

They all crossed the Ohio River at the Kentucky northern border. In the night of August 15 they arrived before Bryant's Station. Bryant's Station was the northernmost settlement of Kentucky, about five miles north of Lexington, the capital. It had been founded in 1779 by William Bryant, who had married Daniel Boone's sister.

The forty log cabins which were built in two lines and connected by a strong palisade fence to form a

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## BATTLE OF THE BLUE LICKS (1782)

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fort, defended themselves successfully all day of August 16. The militia and settlers, both men and women, put up a fight that is famous in history. One young man, Aaron Reynolds, defied Simon Girty and called him a dirty dog. Captain Caldwell's force could not break in.<sup>1</sup>

Expresses rode madly south on the Lexington road, for aid from the other settlements. Forty-six men cut their way in, from Daniel Boone's town of Boonesborough, twenty-three miles. By sunrise of August 17 all the Caldwell Indians and whites had vanished into the forest.

But Daniel Boone himself was on his way from Boonesborough, with reinforcements for Bryant's Station. As major he commanded the Boonesborough militia. With him there were his brother Samuel, and his youngest son Israel. From Harrodsburgh Colonel Stephen Trigg brought up other militia including the fiery Irishman Major Hugh McGary. At Lexington Colonel John Todd had assembled his Lexington militia.

When by forced marches they were gathered at Bryant's Station, about noon of August 17, they had one hundred and sixty horsemen, swelled to one hundred and eighty-two horse and foot by the Bryant's garrison.

Colonel Todd was chosen commander-in-chief. Colonel Benjamin Logan was expected at any hour with another detachment, from Logan's Station. Whether to wait for him, they did not know. They

<sup>1</sup> See "Boys' Book of Frontier Fighters."



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## BOYS' BOOK OF BORDER BATTLES

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feared that the Caldwell invaders might get away without punishment, unless pursued at once.

Daniel Boone favored waiting until Colonel Logan should arrive. As matters now appeared, the Indians and Canadians were the stronger party and might prove a tough problem. The trail signs said that they were retreating leisurely; they were disappointed but not defeated, and probably would give battle in the hopes of winning plunder.

Major Hugh McGary supported Daniel Boone.

"Let us halt here for twenty-four hours, and we'll have Logan's help," he said. "Then we can follow those scoundrels clear to their towns if necessary to catch 'em. As matters now are, we're too few. That villain Girty claimed they had six hundred whites and warriors, didn't he? Of course he lied; but we'll allow 'em three hundred, at the least. And they're well armed. I'll pledge you my head that they'll not go back as fast as they came on, and we'll have plenty of time to overhaul 'em after Logan joins us. Then we can battle them with good chance of success."

But Colonel Todd laughed.

"Why, sir, if a single day is lost, those red varmints can never be overtaken. They'll cross the Ohio and disperse. Now is the time to strike them, while they are in a body. You talk of numbers? Nonsense, sir! The more the merrier. For my part I'm determined to pursue without a moment's delay, and I doubt not but that there are brave men here to follow me."

Colonel Trigg sided with him. The arguments for and against pursuit at once lasted all the afternoon. A

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## BATTLE OF THE BLUE LICKS (1782)

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number of the hot-headed Kentuckians grew impatient. They feared no odds, they were wild to punish the reds and the renegades and teach them to keep out of Kentucky; and when the scouts reported that the Caldwell column actually had blazed the trees along the route, as if to challenge the eye, the hot-heads twitted the cautious Boone and McGary men with being afraid.

That was enough. One Kentuckian was held equal to any three Indians. The vote was taken, to pursue without waiting for the Logan detachment.. Early in the morning of August 18, the one hundred and eighty-two, commanded by Colonel John Todd, started out to catch up with the enemy.

From Bryant's Station a buffalo trail wended northeast forty miles to the Lower Blue Licks of the Licking River. The Blue Licks was a famous crossing of the Licking, on the way to the Ohio. It also was a great spot for the deer and buffalo which sought the salt of the "licks."

The trail had been made still plainer. The Indians had blazed either side of it with their hatchets, so that all might see. This did not look good to Daniel Boone. Such a thing was contrary to Indian custom—wasn't "nattural." It seemed like a defiance, to the hot-heads, and they waxed the hotter. The little column hastened. By evening it had covered thirty-three miles. The Lower Blue Licks crossing of the Licking River lay only six or seven miles before.

Camp was ordered. The trail had continued very fresh. When in the dewy morning of August 19 the van of the column burst out from the forest into the

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## BOYS' BOOK OF BORDER BATTLES

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meadow bottoms of the Blue Licks, the riders sighted the rear guard of the enemy full in view on the other side. Several Indians, just out of rifle shot, were climbing a rocky ridge, gazed back, and in no hurry at all proceeded upon their way.

The column halted, to consider. The Indians had acted bold and confident; evidently were luring the pursuit on. Colonel Todd sent a handful of scouts across, to examine the country. If the column advanced by the trail, it would have to climb up that same rocky ridge—a ridge of black, ugly rocks cropped bare by the deer and buffalo, and containing no covert except a few low cedars. Beyond the ridge, what?

While the scouts were gone, the colonel called a council of the officers, and asked for Daniel Boone's opinion again. Daniel Boone spoke slowly, leaning upon his long "Betsy" rifle and chewing a twig.

"Wall, I do know these Blue Licks, an' I ought to. They're a place I can't forgit. Once I was taken prisoner hyar by the Shawnee, an' ag'in I was attacked hyar an' my brother Squire was killed in my sight. The Blue Licks have alluz brought me bad fortune. Now, the river makes a horse-shoe bend around these licks. This buff'ler trace mounts atop yonder ridge, whar those Injuns disappeared. The country gits brushier, an' thar's two ravines, headin' in on either side the ridge, formin' a right good ambuscade. If the enemy is layin' for us, he'll be in them two ravines. We've come too fur to go back. We kin wait hyar, for Logan; or we kin divide up, send one party up river to cross at the rapids an' cut in for the rear of any

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## BATTLE OF THE BLUE LICKS (1782)

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ambuscade whilst t'other party attacks straight in front. I'll say frankly, gentlemen, that to my notion, knowin' Injuns as I do, we're faced by a bigger force than we reckoned on, an' we're in a tight place of their own choosin'. No man dare accuse me of not bein' willin' to fight when a fight's due; but I'd advise purty keerful reconnoiterin' till we're sartin jest what we're up against. I don't like all this silence and boldness and lonesomeness, nohow. Thar's mischief brewin'."

The scouts returned. They reported that the Indians were gone. No enemy was to be seen; no movement had been glimpsed. The ridge and the country around it seemed deserted.

The men hesitated and discussed. But Hugh McGary, who had been taunted with cowardice back at Bryant's Station, could hold in no longer. He was one of the earliest of the Kentucky settlers; had lost thirty of his forty horses to the Indians; had become an Indian hunter and an Indian hater.

"You all could talk big enough, back at Bryant's," he angrily said; "and when I spoke of waiting for Logan you hinted that I was showing the white feather. So I gave way and joined the pursuit very willingly. Now when you have a chance to strike the enemy you turn pale and talk of waiting, yourselves, and of 'numbers' and 'position,' and all that. We'll see who'll fight. You're scared into being wise at last, but you've come far for a fight and fight you shall or I'll disgrace you forever." He uttered the war-whoop. "Let all who are not cowards follow me!" cried Major Hugh

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McGary, spurring his horse into the ford, and waving his hat.

The hour was eight o'clock. Some ahorse, some afoot, the hot-heads dashed after Major McGary; the remainder of the one hundred and eighty-one had to follow. A little order was enforced when they reached the farther bank. Major Harland and company took the trail in the advance; Colonel Trigg commanded on the right, Major McGary in the center, Daniel Boone on the left.

Colonel Todd, commanding all, oversaw from behind the center. He was an experienced fighter; had served as adjutant-general to General Andrew Lewis in the great Indian battle of Point Pleasant, 1774.

Up the ridge the column hustled, stung by Major McGary's words, and foolishly not throwing skirmishers out upon the flanks, or in the fore.

The country was just as Daniel Boone had said. And the enemy was prepared, just as he had feared. The dare of Major McGary brought terrible rebuke. Bravery is one thing, rashness is another. The advance of Major Harland had scarcely passed to the top of the ridge when from the grass and brush of a ravine on his left a deadly volley crackled—in a moment had struck down twenty of his twenty-three men!

Daniel Boone and the left files arrived first in support; and they, too, met the withering blast. McGary and Colonel Stephen Trigg arrived. Very soon the Kentuckians were fighting for their lives. They were in the open; the enemy filled the ravines on either side

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## BATTLE OF THE BLUE LICKS (1782).

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—began to extend rapidly around on the right, cutting off retreat to the river.

Major Harland had been killed; so had Colonel Trigg and Captains McBride and Gordon and Major Bulger. Colonel John Todd still sat his horse; but he was bleeding from several wounds and clung with both hands to the saddle. Daniel Boone's son Israel was down and dying.

"Back! Back across the river!"

That was the cry. Horse and foot, those who were able tore for the meadow bottoms and the ford. Daniel Boone rushed forward, first, to pick up Israel. The Indians had sprung from ambush; the whole slope of the ridge and the bottoms clear to the ford were a great eddy of painted reds and buckskin-clad whites. Tomahawk and knife proved too much for emptied rifles. The remnants of the Kentuckians were being driven headlong into the water. Colonel Todd had fallen from his saddle at last.

Daniel Boone had delayed to rescue Israel. He saw himself barred from the river by a mass of Indians. Carrying Israel he plunged aside into a smaller ravine. He knew all this country well.

Indians followed him close. He fought them back, by pointing his rifle at them. They would dearly have loved to capture "Captain Boone" again—the Big Turtle who had escaped from their midst twice before, and had long defied them, at Boonesborough.

He found out that he could not shake them off, if he carried Israel. And Israel was dead. Then he faced about in earnest. An Indian charged him with the

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## BOYS' BOOK OF BORDER BATTLES

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hatchet. He let Israel drop, and fired. He did not miss. Acting very fast, before the pursuit should close in on him again, he stowed Israel's body in a nook, and ran; gained the river below the ford, and swam across.

At the ford, above, there was fighting. Captain Netherland had crossed safely, on his horse, and might have continued. He had been another of those men called "cowards" at Bryant's Station. Now when the riders would have raced on, regardless of everything except their own scalps, he turned his horse into their path.

"Halt!" he shouted. "Shame on you! Would you leave your comrades afoot and helpless? We must cover the retreat or they'll all be butchered in the water."

The men heard him. They obeyed—they also turned, and with rifle fire cleared the Indians from the ford and helped the struggling foot soldiers to win the hither bank. The Indians poured after, swimming and wading, above and below. Flight was again the only thing.

Captain Robert Patterson, who had founded Lexington in 1779, arrived. He was an elderly, heavy man, and was wounded; had lost his horse but now was upon another, for halfway from the ridge to the river young Aaron Reynolds, well mounted, had seen him staggering along. Aaron was the same bold youth who had defied Simon Girty at Bryant's Station. Reynolds did not hesitate for a moment.

He had vaulted from his saddle shouting:

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## BATTLE OF THE BLUE LICKS (1782)

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“Here! Take my horse, captain. I’m active on my feet and can get away. You must ride, sir.”

He boosted Captain Patterson aboard and running, dived into the ravine that Daniel Boone had entered. He out-footed the Indians, to the river, and swam over. But his buckskin trousers were so soaked that he could go no farther until he had stripped them off and wrung them. While he was sitting, the Indians came upon him and took him prisoner. Three of them led him away as captive.

Then two of the Indians left, to get scalps and plunder. Aaron watched his chance. The one Indian stooped to tie his moccasin. Aaron instantly leaped at him, struck him flat with a blow of the fist, and bolted; doubled through the thickets, ran like a deer, and saved himself.

Captain Patterson made him a present of two hundred acres of good land.

This evening the majority of the Kentuckians who were alive gathered at Bryant’s Station, after a flight of forty miles. Of the one hundred and eighty-two sixty had been killed, twelve wounded, seven captured. For a third time the Blue Licks had been a fatal spot to Daniel Boone. And Kentucky never before had felt such a terrible blow. The flower of her armed men had been defeated.

Colonel Logan and four hundred and fifty militia from Logan’s Station had marched into Bryant’s this very day. They had pushed on at best speed to overtake the Colonel Todd column and save it from destruction; for Colonel Logan also had feared.



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## BOYS' BOOK OF BORDER BATTLES

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A few miles out of Bryant's they had met the first of the fugitives, and had learned that reinforcements were in vain. So they had turned back, to wait for complete news.

On the next day Colonel Logan advanced upon the Blue Licks with his column and a few of the Todd men, including Daniel Boone. The battle field was a frightful sight. Hot sun, and animals, and the fishes in the river had done bad work. Not an Indian, dead or living, was to be found. All that they themselves might do was to collect the bodies of the fallen Kentuckians and bury them. Full many a day there was wailing and weeping in fair Kentucky.

Of all the higher officers only Daniel Boone, Major Levi Todd, the brother of Colonel John Todd, and Major Hugh McGary had escaped. Hugh McGary lived for a long time afterward, until killed while hunting. He never admitted that his rash temper had led him to act wrongly.

The battle of the Blue Licks was the last battle of the Revolution, and the last attack of the Indians upon Kentucky. In September they again crossed the Ohio in force and tried Fort Wheeling settlement of West Virginia, as told in "Boys' Book of Frontier Fighters," but they gained nothing. After this they only foraged in small parties, seeking plunder, and kept close to the Ohio River border.

But to avenge the defeat at Blue Licks, General George Rogers Clark, commanding at Louisville (the Falls of the Ohio), organized an army of one thousand militia and volunteers; the Daniel Boone and the

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## BATTLE OF THE BLUE LICKS (1782)

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Colonel Logan men from interior Kentucky joined him; they all marched north, November 4, from the Ohio at present Cincinnati; destroyed Chillicothe or Piqua and other Shawnee towns, and showed the Indians that no help could be expected from their British father, against the Long Knives. He was done fighting.

## CHAPTER IV.

### TIPPECANOE (1811)

#### BUCKSHOT AND BAYONETS

**A**S the senior officer left in the Colonel Todd command, Daniel Boone made a report of the battle of Blue Licks to Governor Benjamin Harrison of Virginia. Kentucky was still a part of Virginia.

Governor Benjamin Harrison, signer of the Declaration of Independence, and president of the Board of War in the Continental Congress during the Revolution, had a boy, William Henry Harrison. At the time of the battle of the Blue Licks young William Henry was nine and a half years old, and going to school. He grew up to be a soldier. He was destined to deal the finishing blows upon the Indians of the Ohio Country.

Now although the Shawnees, Mingos, Miamis and all gave up hope of keeping any hunting grounds south of the Ohio River, they tried to keep their lands north of it. The terms of peace between the United States and Great Britain dragged disputes with them. Until these disputes were settled the British held to their posts along the Great Lakes. This encouraged the Indians.

Little Turtle of the Miamis arose as a leader of the combined Ohio Country tribes. As related in "Boys' Book of Indian Warriors" he twice drove the United



BAYONETS AT TIPPECANOE



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## TIPPECANOE (1811)

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States troops out of the northern region; but upon August 20, 1794, twelve years almost to a day after the battle of the Blue Licks, General "Mad" Anthony Wayne struck him and defeated him in the battle of Fallen Timbers, near present Toledo, northwestern Ohio.

In the army of General "Mad" Anthony Wayne, William Henry Harrison, aged twenty-one, was a lieutenant of the First Infantry—or First Sub-legion, whose trimmings were white. He had been in the Regular army three years, and he had made good. He seemed to have a military mind; had studied hard, and it was his plan of march that was adopted by the council of officers.

When traveling through the forest in the Indian country, the foot soldiers were divided into two single files, one upon either side of the trail. The horsemen rode in front and behind and upon the flanks. In this way General Wayne moved without being ambushed.

The Indians of the Ohio Valley lost large tracts of their lands. The fighting appeared to be at an end. Lieutenant Harrison resigned from the army in 1798. At the age of twenty-seven, or in 1800, he was appointed Indian Commissioner, and governor of the new Indiana Territory.

His capital was Vincennes, on the lower Wabash River in south-western Indiana. The Shawnees occupied villages in western Ohio and eastern Indiana, where the Miamis had formerly lived. Two twin brothers led their councils. These were La-la-we-thi-ka or Loud Voice, and Tecumseh—Crouching Panther

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## BOYS' BOOK OF BORDER BATTLES

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or Shooting Star. Governor Harrison and Tecumseh had fought against one another at Fallen Timbers, when both were lieutenants.

Soon, now, the Shawnees of the two brothers began to threaten the peace. Loud Voice took the name of Open Door. He pretended to see visions, in which the Great Spirit spoke to him. He prophesied that if the Indians of America listened to him and obeyed his teachings they all would get free of the white man. Tecumseh aided him.

The Prophet (as he was called) journeyed far and wide, from Canada to Florida. He sent his runners, bearing a sacred image and the words of the Great Spirit, even to the tribes of the upper Missouri River in the western plains. Tecumseh also journeyed. The Prophet urged the Indians to grow strong and to sell no more lands; and one day the white race should die by a pestilence. Tecumseh urged them to make ready, and to strike all together, at a sign from him.

Things pointed to a general uprising of the Indians. Governor Harrison tried in vain to make the Prophet and Tecumseh quit their foolishness. The state of affairs continued for six years. The Prophet moved his town from Greenville in western Ohio to the mouth of Tippecanoe Creek in western north Indiana, near present Lafayette. Shawnees from other towns, Miamis, Kickapoos, Winnebagos, Potawatomis, Chippewas, Sacs, Foxes, and delegates from a farther distance gathered there. In their travel back and forth the Indians stole horses, killed cows and pigs, robbed hen roosts, and frightened the timid settlers. More trouble

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## TIPPECANOE (1811)

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with Great Britain loomed—the War of 1812 was drawing near; and the white people of southern Ohio and Indiana felt very uneasy.

The Prophet and his followers had no right to the land upon which they were squatting. It had been sold by the Miamis and the Delawares to the United States. Governor Harrison, as Indian Commissioner, ordered them off. They would not obey.

The Prophet was for peace, but he said that no tribe of Indians should sell any lands without the consent of all the tribes. Tecumseh was for war. At last, in a council held with Governor Harrison at Vincennes he defied the government of the Seventeen Fires to take the land. If the land was taken, then he and his Indians would go to the British in Canada.

The council broke up angrily. How many Indians were being mustered by the Prophet and Tecumseh nobody knew. Nevertheless the tribes of north, south and west were being leagued together, war with Great Britain loomed nearer, the future looked very red, the Ohio Valley seemed in danger of rifle and tomahawk again. The year was 1811; many a man still living remembered the bloody days of Kentucky and West Virginia.

Vincennes itself feared an attack by eight hundred, one thousand (maybe more) warriors. Tecumseh set out upon another trip, into the south. The Prophet stayed at his Prophet's Town upon the Tippecanoe, one hundred and fifty miles to the north. Governor Harrison resolved to go and see him; build a fort, and if necessary break up the town.



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## BOYS' BOOK OF BORDER BATTLES

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"The bandits under the Prophet are to be attacked and vanquished," were the instructions of the Secretary of War to Governor and Commissioner Harrison, "provided such a measure shall be absolutely necessary."

The plan for building one or more forts was approved. The Secretary of War directed Colonel John P. Boyd of the Fourth United States Infantry at Pittsburgh to report to Governor Harrison, for service. The Fourth Infantry numbered only two hundred and fifty men. It brought Captain Moses Whitney's company of United States Rifles; one company of the Seventh Infantry also joined. There were about three hundred Regulars in all.

The Indiana militia were summoned to rendezvous at Vincennes. They had been well drilled; were almost equal to the Regulars. Among them was Captain Spier Spencer's company of Mounted Rifles, who wore short jackets of bright yellow and were called "Spencer's Yellow-Jackets." There were three companies of Indiana dragoons, commanded by Major Joseph Hamilton Daviess, who had volunteered for the campaign. He was district attorney of Kentucky, always signed himself "Jo: Daviess," and loved to be talked about. But no one could question his bravery.

Young George Croghan of Louisville, Kentucky, likewise volunteered, to become aide-de-camp to Colonel Boyd. The famous old hero General George Rogers Clark of Louisville was his uncle. He, too, won great fame as a soldier: gallantly stood off an overwhelming force of British and Indians in the War of

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## TIPPECANOE (1811)

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1812, and served under General Zachary Taylor in the Mexican War.

Colonel Abraham Owen, commanding the Eighteenth Kentucky, was another volunteer, as a private. Governor Harrison promptly appointed him aide-de-camp. Kentucky's veteran Indian fighter Major-General Samuel Wells of the Fourth Kentucky Regiment arrived with two companies of Kentucky Mounted Riflemen. There was a company of volunteer spies. Altogether, Governor Harrison had nine hundred and fifty officers and men.

The last week in September they were started from Vincennes up the Wabash River, by boat and by horses. Sixty miles from Vincennes a fort was built, just above present Terre Haute, Indiana, to protect the supplies. The stockade was named Fort Harrison.

Governor Harrison delayed at the new fort, to await supplies. The delay chafed him. He learned that the Prophet had declared war. Some friendly Delawares reported:

"We talked with the Prophet. He has raised the tomahawk against the Americans. When we refused to join him he treated us meanly. He is dancing the war dance every night. He will burn the first prisoners that he takes."

This frightened the Indian interpreters. They declined to go on in advance with request for a council. But twenty-four Miamis agreed to do it. They were to tell the Prophet that he must send the Winnebagos, Potawatomis, Kickapoos and all outsiders back home; he must give up the horses stolen from the white peo-

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## BOYS' BOOK OF BORDER BATTLES

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ple; the Indians who had killed white people should be surrendered.

The Miamis left. They did not return. It looked as though they also had enlisted under the Prophet.

On October 28 Governor Harrison moved out of Fort Harrison, against the Prophet's Town, ninety miles up the Wabash. Lieutenant-Colonel James Miller and fifty sick soldiers remained in the post.

Governor Harrison was wise. He took no chances of ambush. He knew Indians, although he did not know how many warriors the Prophet had. Rumors said six hundred, eight hundred, one thousand; and the allied tribes were ready to rise. As likely as not, six thousand warriors awaited only the signal.

Using his favorite order of march, he advanced with his infantry, cavalry and wagons. Beyond Fort Harrison northern Indiana and Illinois on the west were red country. Few whites lived here. It was a wilderness of forest and prairie. The shortest trail to the Prophet's Town lay on the east and southeast of the beautiful Wabash, and cut across the inside of the great bend made by the river into the northeast. But that trail led through thick timber. The spies of the Prophet would be watching, and planning ambush. Governor Harrison reconnoitered that trail, for a feint; then he took the longer west-side trail through the grove-dotted prairies.

The marches were slow and careful, but no hostile signs interrupted. He was eight days in advancing eighty miles; on November 5 the column emerged from a patch of low wooded hills into full view of a great

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prairie stretching north and west as far as eye could see. Trees lined the streams; deer grazed, turkeys burst from underfoot, wild fowl flew from the creeks and ponds; but no Indian was sighted.

This night the column bivouacked within eleven miles of the Prophet's Town.

Governor Harrison re-formed his next day's march into several short columns, kept closely in touch and prepared to extend instantly into line of battle. Indians were now hovering about. They declined to reply to the hails by the interpreters.

The march approached within a mile and a half of the town. Captain Dubois of the Spy company offered to go on up with a white flag and ask for a talk. Very soon he sent back word that the Indians were beckoning him forward but were closing in behind, to surround him. They would not answer him.

Governor Harrison decided to camp for the night in the woods here, and seek a council in the morning. While he was placing the camp (but not in a very good spot) Major Jo: Daviess rode back from a scout with his dragoons. He said that the ground at the river near the town was flat and open, and that the Indians had hooted him—had dared him to come on.

Governor Harrison's officers begged him to accept the dare and to camp at the river. Better a battle than a show of the white feather. So in order of battle the little army gladly moved on again, eastward up the river for the ground that the dashing Major Jo: Daviess had selected.

The Prophet did not like this. He sent three Indians

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to say that he was surprised to see his friend Governor Harrison marching to attack; already their good friend Chief Winemac of the Potawatomis was on his way with the Miamis, by the short east side trail, to talk with the governor.

"Tell the Prophet that I am not coming to attack his town without warning," Governor Harrison directed. "I will camp at the river where there is wood and water, and hold council with him in the morning."

In a short distance the way to the river was shut off by cornfields. While the governor was trying to avoid these, the Indians commenced to threaten in earnest. They called upon the right flank of the line, which was in a cornfield, to halt. An Indian offered to show the governor a good camp spot, with wood and water, near a creek in the northwest, back from the river and to the rear of the town.

The two officers sent to examine the place reported that it would do nicely. They all went over.

The camp ground recommended by the Prophet's Indian proved to be a tongue of high and dry oak land—a pointed island in the midst of the marshy, long-grassed prairie. The tongue flowed down from the north, and pinched out in the south. It was from ten to twenty feet above the prairie. The low or eastern side fronted the Prophet's Town, about a quarter of a mile in the northeast, at Tippecanoe Creek; the high western side skirted another creek, bordered by willows and such brush.

Governor Harrison thought that it was indeed an excellent camp ground for white man's country, but

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not in red man's country. The long grass and the brush surrounding it just suited Indian attack; the marshy prairie would bog his troops. Still, he could not back out. Thereupon he made arrangements for the night.

He ordered camp pitched in the narrowing end of the tongue. The camp lines followed the shape of the tongue, here. On the Prophet's Town side, or front, there were four companies; across the broad north end of the camp there were three companies; on the western or creek side there were four companies; in the narrow south end there was one company, Captain Spier Spencer's "Yellow-Jackets." In the center there were the officers' tents and the baggage; at either end, inside, there was the support of the Daviess dragoons and some Mounted Rifles. The camp was in form of a blunt pyramid, its base to the north.

The lines were single lines, which were better than double lines in case of Indian attack. Indian attack is not a shock attack, like white soldiers' attack; it is made in loose order. A single rank changes front more quickly than double rank, and manoeuvres faster.

Tonight Commander-in-chief Harrison told his officers that the camp lines were battle lines. Each man was expected to sleep with his musket, loaded and bayonet fixed, by his side; when alarm sounded he should spring up and stand in his place. The companies would hold their positions and fight without further instructions.

It was a chill, drizzly night. Only the Regulars had tents. The militia and volunteers lay under their

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blankets, along the rows of oak wood fires, and wrapped their muskets to keep the locks dry. The majority of the men were disappointed; they feared that there would be no fighting, after all. The Kentuckians especially hated to return home without having had a "brush." The experienced scouts said: "You'll have fighting, and to spare."

At the Prophet's Town all was excitement. The fierce, warlike Winnebagos declared for battle. Not tonight, though. In the morning the council should be held with the white chief; two Winnebagos proposed to strike him dead, as a signal; then the shooting should open from every side.

But during the medicine-making the Prophet announced that by his magic powers one-half the white army was now dead, and the other half was crazy and ready for the hatchet. The warriors believed and prepared. White Loon, Stone Eater, and Winemac the Potawatomi were to lead.

In the camp the tired soldiers had heard the sounds of dancing and singing. The night closed down dark and murky. The moon, in its third quarter, rose late, behind clouds.

A strong screen of sentries had been posted below the edges of the tongue, and among the oaks across the north end of the camp. The guard detail consisted of one hundred and twenty officers and men. Commander-in-chief Harrison had left nothing undone. He really did not believe that the Prophet would attack; but he still took no chances.

During all the march, reveille had been beaten by

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the drummer orderly an hour before sunrise every morning, and the men had stood in line until broad daylight, guarding against surprise. Governor Harrison had learned this method when a lieutenant under Anthony Wayne. This morning of November 7, at a quarter after four o'clock he had just stepped out of his tent, was pulling on his boots beside his fire, chatting with several officers and about to listen for the drummer's reveille beating up the men, when from the oaks and brush beyond the northwest corner of the camp there pealed a ringing musket shot.

It was followed at once by a shout, and by the war-whoops, and by a volley. Corporal Stephen Mars of Kentucky, the farthest outpost on that side, had dimly seen dark figures slinking toward him through the black, wet bushes. He had fired, and had shouted and run—but the Indians were close upon him; had killed him and were charging headlong.

The men still asleep scarcely had time for staggering up, into line. The guards dashed wildly in, for shelter.

"Injuns! The Injuns! The grass is full of 'em!"

The soldiers of the northwest corner, facing the oaks and the creek, fired one volley from muskets loaded with twelve buckshot each. Then they were fighting hand to hand, bayonet and musket stock against knife and hatchet. Captain Barton's company of the Fourth Regulars and Captain Geiger's company of Kentucky Mounted Rifles bore the brunt. The Indians were so desperate that several broke through into the camp.

The terrible yelling sounded from everywhere.



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Governor Harrison sought his horse, a favorite white mare. She had strayed during the night—his black servant was so frightened that he could not tell where he had tied her again. Governor Harrison seized another horse, a bay; and well that he did so. His aide, Colonel Owen, mounted a white horse and was shot dead before he had been in the saddle five minutes. One of the two Winnebagos took him for the governor.

Commander-in-chief Harrison galloped hither-thither. He reinforced the shattered northwest corner; he ordered that the smouldering fires be stamped out—they gave marks to the enemy.

The attack was spreading rapidly. The Indians manoeuvred and charged by signals of deerhoof rattles. The whole broad north end of the camp was being enveloped, the yells and rattlings and shooting spread around to the east front, and on to the narrow south end, and thence to the rear in the southwest.

Both flanks or ends were being turned. Reinforcements hastened. Governor Harrison, using the best at his disposal, prayed for daylight. If he could hold out until then, he might use the bayonet.

But the fighting now was in darkness briefly illumined by the red flashes of the muskets. Only one in twenty of his men had been under fire before; still, they were standing firmly, and their twelve buckshot to a cartridge were doing execution. Yet they were falling. The Indians seemed to know no fear. The Winnebagos encouraged. Great warriors, they of the northern tribes. Somewhere the Prophet's voice shrilled in a wild medicine song that should paralyze the whites,

and turn the bullets from the shirts of the red stormers.

At the narrow point of the camp the Yellow-Jackets were suffering sorely. The attack appeared to be focused upon them. Captain Spier Spencer had been shot through the head. He cried: "Fight on!" He was shot through both thighs. He cried: "Fight on, men!" He was being lifted up, for first aid, when a ball passed through his heart.

His first lieutenant, Richard McMahan, and his second lieutenant, Thomas Berry, were dead.

Captain Jacob Warwick, of the Indianans there, had fallen. At the field hospital the surgeon had told him that he could not live.

"I shall go back then and fight as long as I am able," Captain Warwick said. And so he did, for he was a large strong man.

Captain W. C. Baen of the Regulars had been mortally wounded. There was hard fighting at the north end of the camp, too. The Indians were snugly posted in a clump of oaks. Twice Major Jo: Daviess asked permission to rout them out with his dragoons.

"I will give Major Daviess a chance to distinguish himself before the battle is over," Commander-in-chief Harrison replied. "Let him be patient."

That did not suit Major Daviess. The third time he got answer:

"Tell Major Daviess he may now use his own discretion."

Out charged Major Jo: Daviess, wearing a white blanket-coat, at the head of a small detachment of dragoons. He was shot before he had gone thirty feet

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beyond the lines; his men were out-flanked and driven in, bringing him mortally wounded. Captain Josiah Snelling's company of the Fourth Regulars counter-charged and cleaned the oak clump.

Commander Harrison was grazed by a ball through his stock or neck piece; another ball struck his saddle and glanced along his thigh; another punctured his hat brim; another wounded his horse.

The lines still held. Not an Indian won through after the first surprise. Daylight brightened in a gloomy sky at six o'clock. For almost two hours the fighting had raged without a lapse. Now the tables were turned. Major-General Wells, the Kentucky veteran, led a charge of infantry bayonets and dragoon sabers, from the north end; the Prophet's warriors scurried out of the oaks and brush and into the weeds of the marshes. From the south end the Fourth Infantry companies of Captain Joel Cook and Lieutenant Charles Larabee likewise charged with the bayonet and cleared that flank.

The Prophet's warriors saw that the soldiers of the Seventeen Fires of the United States were not paralyzed, nor dead; on the contrary were much alive. They gave up; they fled; the battle of Tippecanoe was over.

Governor Harrison had lost one aide-de-camp colonel, one major, three captains, two lieutenants, three noncommissioned officers and fifty-two privates killed or mortally wounded; two lieutenant-colonels, one adjutant, one assistant surgeon, two captains, three lieutenants, fourteen noncommissioned officers, one musi-

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cian and one hundred and two privates, wounded. Total, one hundred and eighty-eight, out of nine hundred.

But not a man had been captured; only three bodies had been scalped and two of these scalps had been retaken. This showed how firmly the lines had held.

All the day the soldiers remained in camp, attending to the wounded, eating horse flesh, and entrenching against another attack. Searching parties found thirty-eight dead Indians, and many signs of desperately wounded. Another attack was not made. The wailing of the squaws in the Prophet's Town ceased. When the dragoons and mounted riflemen rode into it they found it abandoned by everybody except one old man with a broken leg.

Having utterly destroyed the Prophet's Town, Governor Harrison on November 9 loaded his wounded into all his wagons, and turned for the long journey back to Vincennes.

The battle of Tippecanoe freed the Ohio Valley from fear of an Indian uprising. It was the last effort of the allied tribes to drive out the settlers, just as their forays of 1782 and their success in the fatal battle of the Blue Licks had been their last effort to keep the Ohio River border.

After this the Indians lifted the hatchet only in revenge; they knew that they could not regain their lands; the Ohio Country was lost to them.

Tippecanoe gave William Henry Harrison a great reputation. He entered the army again, as brigadier general, for the War of 1812. October 5, 1813, he de-

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feated the British and Tecumseh's warriors at the hot battle of the Thames, in Ontario, Canada.<sup>1</sup>

Here Tecumseh was killed. Here the allied Indians were finally shattered.

But General Harrison lives in history as "Old Tippecanoe." When at the age of sixty-seven, in 1840 he ran for President, the slogan "Tippecanoe and Tyler too" carried the country for him.

"Oh, what has caused this great commotion  
Our country through?  
It is the ball now rolling on  
For Tippecanoe and Tyler too;  
For Tippecanoe and Tyler too!"

He was pictured as living in a log cabin on the banks of the Ohio, ploughing corn and drinking hard cider. Log cabins were erected everywhere, as his totem; and collecting about them his campaigners sang the chorus:

"Hurrah for the father of all the great West,  
For the Buckeye who followed the plow;  
The foeman in terror his valor confessed,  
And we'll honor the conqueror now.  
His country assailed in the darkest of days,  
To her rescue impatient he flew,  
The warwhoop's fell blast and the rifle's red blaze  
But awakened Old Tippecanoe."

<sup>1</sup> See "Boys' Book of Indian Warriors."

## CHAPTER V

### OLD FORT MIMS THE FOOLISH (1813)

#### AND THE FEARFUL PRICE IT PAID

**W**HILE the battle of Tippecanoe was being fought Tecumseh was upon his way home from a visit to the Creeks and Cherokees of Alabama and Georgia. His mother had been a Southern Indian. The Creeks and Cherokees formerly mingled with the Shawnees, their cousins. But this had not been a mere friendship visit. He desired the Southern Indians to join the red league against the Americans.

His first trip failed to win the Creeks, whose peace party was stronger than their war party. His second trip, in the winter of 1812, resulted better. He had entered the British army; he promised the Creeks that when they struck, the king across the water would help them, for there was war between the English and the Americans.

The Creek war party, whose color was red, raised their red war poles and listened to their own prophet, Monahoe. Prophets had become the fashion. The Choctaws, Cherokees and Chickasaws would not join in this war to free Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee. They remained true to the Washington father, who had treated them justly. But the Creek nation alone was strong; it numbered thirty thousand

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people, with seven thousand warriors. It lived in civilized style; its well-to-do men kept slaves to till the fields of corn and cotton; their houses were built of cane and logs, and contained furnished rooms; the Creek towns were laid out like white towns; there were many large plantations; the men and women wore clothes of cotton woven by their own looms.

During the years since they had settled upon their lands in Alabama the Creeks had married with outsiders; their blood had become white and black as well as red; they were sending their children to white schools. White traders had been living among them, and had raised families.

In 1812 their war chiefs were Menewa, and Lam-chat-tee or Red Eagle. Red Eagle's English name was William Weatherford, taken from the name of his father, a Scotch-English trader, Charles Weatherford. His mother had been a princess of the royal Wind clan of the Creeks. His uncle, her half brother, had been Alexander McGillivray, called the Emperor of the Creeks, son of another Scotch adventurer and a princess who was half French and half Creek.

The Weatherford family became wealthy and prominent. Red Eagle was brought up on the great plantation beside the Alabama River. Few Southern planters knew more luxury. All the wealth descended to Red Eagle. But although he was educated by private teachers, and was of white blood as well as of red blood, he remained Indian at heart. He was a Creek, and despised the Americans. Tecumseh said that the sight of white people made his flesh creep; with Red Eagle it

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was much the same. The only outsiders that he desired about him were the black slaves; for himself he wished liberty.

By 1812 he had grown to be a tall, straight, handsome, flashing-eyed dark man of thirty-two; was noted as an orator, a horseman, a hunter, an athlete and a warrior. He cared nothing for his education. He lived in state upon his plantation; he spoke in the councils and the old men listened, for he spoke like a king; then, at times, he plunged into savage carousals and the young men thought themselves honored by his invitation to carouse with him.

Red Eagle would forget his white blood. The whites could give him nothing; he was rich, in land and slaves. He feared that the Creeks would some day sell their lands, perhaps become slaves themselves; at any rate, yield like the red nations of the North had yielded.

So he listened to the fiery warnings and the earnest promises of Tecumseh. The war party followed him and Chief Menewa. There were raids and skirmishes. The white settlers sallied out and were defeated in the little battle of Burnt Corn. That spread keen alarm. The plantation families of southern Alabama fled like the families of Kentucky and West Virginia once had fled, to the nearest shelters. Some two hundred people gathered at Fort Mims, in southwestern Alabama where the Alabama and Tombigbee Rivers unite to form the bayous at the head of Mobile Bay. It was the Lake Tensaw country, and the vicinity was known as the Tensaw Settlement.

This Fort Mims (which is also written Mimms) was



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the home of Planter Samuel Mims. As soon as the Creeks had begun to make trouble he had enclosed his house and buildings with a stockade of heavy split rails piled one upon another between pairs of posts. The stockade measured seventy yards square, surrounding about an acre. It was pierced with loopholes three and a half feet from the ground. Bastions or out-jutting half-squares were added, to command the faces of the walls.

Fort Mims resembled the stockades of Boonesborough, in Kentucky, and of Fort Wheeling, in West Virginia. A number of other settlers' centers were fortified at the same time. There were twenty and more such forts, along the Alabama River and elsewhere. The people of Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi and Tennessee feared a general uprising of tribes, as Indiana had feared.

Fort Mims was situated back from the river, but was skirted by the Southern cane-brakes and swamps and heavy pine timber. The refugees from the outside region put up small houses inside the stockade, for shelter until the Creeks should have been brought to peace. There finally were twenty-four white families, including Creoles or mixed bloods, and one hundred negro slaves, making about two hundred and seventy men, women and children.

A lieutenant and sixteen militia soldiers of Alabama had marched in, as garrison. Then in July, 1813, Governor William C. C. Claiborne of the new State of Louisiana, who had been appointed commanding general of all that district, sent Major Daniel Beasley

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with one hundred and seventy-five Mississippi Volunteers.

Seventy of the settlers were organized into another battalion, under Dixon Bailey. This gave a fighting force of two hundred and sixty well equipped officers and men, who ought to be able to hold the stockade against Red Eagle's warrior Creeks.

But Red Eagle was no ordinary leader; he combined education and savagery, pride and cunning, and two bloods. The Creeks themselves were terrific battlers; they could match any Indians in America. Red Eagle had one thousand warriors at his back.

There were so many people in the stockade that Major Beasley built an addition, sixty feet deep, across the east front. Here he quartered the most of his soldiers, in tents; he occupied a house here. The gateway now connecting the old stockade and the new was left as a wide gap between; the large double gates were moved to the gateway in the east side of the new stockade. That was the main gate.

General Claiborne paid a visit of inspection. He ordered two more bastions to be constructed, and warned Major Beasley against a surprise. Said General Claiborne:

"To respect an enemy, and prepare in the best possible way to meet him, is the certain means to insure success."

No advice could have been wiser. It was a sound military maxim. Major Beasley set to work, urged on by alarms of an attack. The attack did not come—he lost patience with the timid folks, black and white

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and red, who brought the rumors and frightened his people. Soon he commenced to let the work drift. The summer was very hot, the fever of the swamps made the men ill, the Volunteers begged off from drill, the block-houses were not pushed and discipline lapsed.

A number of the soldiers were permitted to go home, to see their relatives and friends; detachments were sent to reinforce other forts. Toward the end of August there were less than two hundred armed men in Fort Mims.

The alarms continued to arrive. The friendly Choctaws passed the word that the Creeks of Chief Weatherford were planning to seize Fort Mims. A slave who had been with Red Eagle escaped to say that the Creeks were already on their way. Scouts went out from the fort, and after looking about asserted that the slave was a liar.

On August 29 a dispatch was received from General Claiborne, dated at another fort, warning that Mims was surely to be attacked. This same day two negroes, herding cattle outside the fort, ran in crying that they had seen painted faces.

Major Beasley was again all out of patience with such tales. He ordered Captain Middleton to investigate. Captain Middleton's men saw nothing.

"Tie those black rascals up and flog them for lying," Major Beasley directed.

One slave was flogged, but the master of the other refused to let him be whipped.

"You will obey orders and have your lying black

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boy punished as he deserves, sir, or you will leave the fort in the morning," Major Beasley declared.

"He never has lied before," Settler Fletcher answered. "He is a good negro. To turn me and my family out among the Creeks is unjust. But I will think the matter over."

In the morning he submitted. What else could he do? And it made no difference, as happened, for at that very moment one thousand Creek warriors, black and yellow and olive, in their cloth head-dresses and their bright cotton shirts and leggins, armed with guns and knives, hatchets and clubs, were ambushed under Red Eagle in the cane brakes and swamp grasses and the pine timber, within musket shot of the walls.

They had been prowling about for some time. They had seen the east gates open, night and day, until the sand had drifted against the sagging ends. The longer the Creeks waited, the harder it would be to close those gates in a hurry.

Red Eagle Weatherford had now figured that the time was ripe. The hour should be noon, this day, August 30.

Planter Fletcher's slave boy had been tied to the whipping post, for punishment. The other negro had been sent out again to herd the cattle. He much disliked to go, but go he must. He saw the signs of Indians, as before; he dared not run into the fort and say so. Instead, he fled to Fort Pierce, up river from Fort Mims, and babbled there. The whippings cost Major Beasley dear.

The morning had been close and hot. The sentries,

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stationed to cover a cleared space of one hundred and fifty yards in front of the fort, nodded as they stood; the cane brakes swam before their heavy eyes. Inside the fort the other soldiers lolled, playing cards or dozing. The settlers kept in the shade of their houses; the cooks, both men and women, were preparing dinner; it is said that there were one hundred children, white and black, playing about. The scene was scarcely that of a military camp in wartime, threatened by a crafty enemy.

The drummer orderly beat the mess call, to dinner. That was the signal to Red Eagle's men also. The troops and the settlers in the fort were noisily hurrying for the tables, leaving the poor slave tied fast in the hot sun and awaiting the lash. The fierce Creeks sprang from their cane brake and charged like rabid wolves across the open space. So swiftly they had broken from covert and so stupid were the guards, that they were within thirty yards of the gateway before a gun was fired.

Major Beasley chanced to be looking through the gateway from the porch of his headquarters house. He saw them actually as soon as the sentries saw them. He shouted—"Indians! The Indians, men!"—and ran for the gates. They could not be closed; the sand blocked them and he and his helpers worked vainly. Strain, strain—haul, tug—no use! Yelling triumphantly, the Creeks had arrived. In a moment they had shot Major Beasley through the body, had cut him down, hurled him and his support aside, and were pouring into the new stockade.

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"Fight hard, men!" were Major Beasley's last words, from under the trampling moccasins. "Take care of the ammunition—rally in the houses."

The Volunteers did rally right gallantly; the settlers, men and women, seized whatever weapons they could find; the slaves fought with clubs and hands; the children threw stones and brandished sticks. For a time the Creeks were held to the sixty-foot width of the new stockade. They could not enter the old gateway into the main stockade. But they deployed along the outer walls; they thrust their muskets and rifles through the loop holes, the defenders did likewise, sometimes at one double discharge both fighters fell.

Red Eagle upon a splendid black horse commanded the Creeks. In the stockade Dixon Bailey, a skilled hunter and a brave mixed blood, had taken the command. He and all the men were battling for the women and children. They felt that the Creeks would spare nobody except the slaves. It was a struggle to the victory or the death.

The gate in the west end of the stockade was being battered. Axes had blunderingly been left outside; the Creeks were wielding these. A squad of the Indians had climbed upon the half finished bastion or blockhouse at the corner near that gate, and were shooting down into the stockade. They were driven back. Burning arrows had set a house inside ablaze—the kitchen of the Mims house in the center of the stockade was smoking, and the house itself was in danger.

But in spite of the bullets streaming through the

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loop holes and the gates and over the walls, the Fort Mims people did not falter. Hurrah! The enemy had done his worst—he was slackening—he had had enough and had gone to plundering the cabins outside. What a sudden joy swept the despairing garrison! Then the joy faded. Upon his horse Red Eagle had dashed hither-thither among his warriors, turning them back. On they came.

Again they entered the open east gates; they succeeded in hacking through the west gate; they scrambled over the south wall. The soldiers and settlers were very tired, and were few in number, now. The old men and women and the children had been stowed in the Mims house, which was large and two-story. It caught fire, at last—the Creek warriors surrounded it and let it burn. The slave at the whipping post had long ago been killed. The fighting had continued for three hours.

The only vacant place left was the north bastion, opposite the south wall. This had been Dixon Bailey's headquarters; all the survivors from bullet and hatchet and club and fire were pressed into it. They filled the enclosure full.

While they stoutly fought as best they could, Major Bailey called for volunteers to break through the outer wall of it; run the gauntlet and bring rescue. Nobody obeyed. He was bleeding from several wounds—

"I will go," he said.

They held him back.

"You can't do it, Dixon," they panted. "We're cut off. No man could make it."

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The Creeks were raging through the stockade and burning the houses. Red Eagle's heart softened. He ceased being a savage. He flung himself from his horse and ordered his warriors to stop, but he was too late. The bastion yielded, the Creeks burst in; some were killed by the fighting men, some by the fighting women; of all the defenders only twelve or thirteen escaped by tearing a hole through the fence-rail walls. One was Major Dixon Bailey, wounded five times. He went on a little way, to the swamp; there he lay down and died.

Out of the three hundred white persons in Fort Mims about twenty-five saved themselves. The slaves were made captives to serve the Creeks. By twos and threes the refugees straggled into the other posts. A wounded negro woman, in a canoe, first brought the terrible word, to Fort Stodderd, twenty miles from ruined Fort Mims.

The Creeks lost two hundred killed and four hundred wounded; indeed they had reason bitterly to remember the defense of Fort Mims. And the next March General Andrew Jackson cut them to pieces when they, in turn, were behind wooden walls at To-ho-peka or Horseshoe Bend of the Tallapoosa River in eastern Alabama, as told in "Boys' Book of Indian Warriors."

The story of old Fort Mims is not a pleasant story. It is a lesson in preparedness. Major Beasley and his officers were brave but they were foolishly brave; by proving their lack of fear they in the end not only needlessly sacrificed their own lives but, what was worse,



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the lives of the women, old men and children depending on them.

“To respect an enemy, and prepare in the best possible way to meet him, is the certain means of success.” General Claiborne’s advice covers matters of daily life as well as those of war.

## CHAPTER VI

### SEEKING THE SEMINOLES IN FLORIDA (1835)

#### WITH THE REGULARS OF MAJOR DADE

**A** MONG the doctrines taught by the Shawnee Prophet and carried into the South by his brother Tecumseh, was the theory that no Indian lands might be sold to the white men without the consent of all the Indians.

This was perhaps a good doctrine for the protection of the tribes, but it brought many disputes; it split the tribes, for some Indians agreed to sell, and then the other Indians refused to let them sell. It ruined the Shawnees; it divided the Creeks and ruined them also; and it ruined the Seminoles of Florida.

Now, the Seminoles were a branch of the Creeks. In an early day they had separated from the Creeks and had withdrawn into Florida. The Creeks called them Seminoles, or Runaways.

Pretty nearly all the wars with the Indians have been occasioned by land disputes. Sometimes the Indians did not understand, sometimes they broke their promises, and frequently the United States broke its promises or enforced harsh contracts.

When in 1821 the United States bought Florida from Spain the Seminoles were living there. They occupied the best lands; they had been friendly with the

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Spaniards, who did not try to open the country and farm it; they had their cabins of palmetto leaves, and their patches of tilled ground, and traded furs and meat for powder and lead.

The American settler and land speculator entered Florida. To them the Seminoles were only savages—lazy, ignorant savages, at that. They demanded that the Florida lands be thrown upon the market for settlement.

This looked like an easy matter. The Seminoles had no written titles to the land; they were accustomed to doing business by word of mouth with the careless Spaniards. Soon the Seminoles found themselves being gradually pushed into smaller and smaller territory; they signed papers that they could not read, and constantly sold more land than they thought that they had sold; they were punished by fines and whippings when they trespassed, and they were accused of stealing slaves from the white planters. There long had been bad feeling, on this score, between the planters of Georgia and the Seminoles. It was true that runaway slaves sought refuge among the Seminoles of Florida.

The Seminoles evidently had to get out. Then in 1824 their head men were induced to sign a treaty, which bound the nation to remove to a reservation, somewhere else, when such a reservation should be found. In 1832 the reservation was found by the United States in Arkansas.

The Seminoles sent a committee to look at it. The committee did not like Arkansas; but by touching the

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## SEEKING THE SEMINOLES (1835)

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goosequill they signed a paper which said that they did like it, and that the nation would go there within three years.

When they had returned to Florida, and learned that they had signed away their homes, they and all the other Seminoles, and their negro slaves vowed that they would never go.

In April, 1834, Brevet Brigadier General Duncan L. Clinch, colonel of the Fourth United States Infantry, was ordered to Florida, to prepare the Seminoles for leaving. The treaty was laid out upon the council table at the house of General Wiley Thompson, the Indian agent.

"It is a white man's treaty," the chiefs declared. "We did not understand it. The agents lied to us. None of us had a right to sign such a paper, and some of us never touched the quill."

A young head-warrior, Osceola or Black-drink Halloer, stepped forward. He drove his knife half-way to the hilt through the paper and into the table.

"The only treaty I will sign is with this," he said.

The Seminoles went back into their swamps, and General Clinch could do nothing; nor could Wiley Thompson, the Government Indian agent with the Seminoles, who, they said, had lied to them with his smooth tongue and long speeches.

In February of the next year, 1835, the Government sent ten companies of Regulars, as reinforcements to General Clinch; made ready with steamboats to take the Seminoles to New Orleans and up the Mississippi; had wagons assembling to carry them from the mouth

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of the Arkansas River across country into Arkansas.

The result was seven and one-half years of war, with forty battles, which cost the United States fifteen hundred soldiers and \$20,000,000.

The white planters of Georgia and Florida had looked upon the Seminoles as an easy-going, shiftless people, good only as swamp hunters, and without the nerve to fight. But these stoutly built natives were as fierce in fighting as their brothers the Creeks, although they mustered less than three thousand warriors. Like the Creeks they were of mixed bloods—red, black and white. They had their towns and their farms; they owned slaves. The negroes preferred the red masters to the white, and the half-wild life of the palmetto groves and the bayous to the plantation life.

The Seminoles were helped by the country in which they lived and which they so well knew. They had snug retreats upon dry ground in the midst of the great swamps, reached by blind trails for paddle or moccasin through the tall grasses and the palmettos. There were bear and deer and turkey in plenty; there also were alligators, poisonous snakes, and mosquitoes; a single step aside would plunge man or horse out of sight. By canoe and by foot the Seminoles ranged as they pleased.

Micanopy was their head chief, as Menewa had been the head chief of the warring Creeks, back in 1813. Osceola, aged thirty-two, was another Red Eagle, who spoke as a chief. He was one quarter white, light colored, finely formed, smart, eloquent and fiery, and led the councils.

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## SEEKING THE SEMINOLES (1835)

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It was he who enforced the law against selling to the whites without the permission of all the tribe, under penalty of death. Nothing was to be sold; nothing, whether land or goods.

An old chief, Charley-E-Mathlar, accepted American money; he pretended that it was paid to him for some cattle. Osceola and party met him returning home by the trail; killed him. Taking the money from the handkerchief Osceola scattered it.

"It is blood money, made of red man's blood," he said. "It will bring evil upon all who touch it."

The time limit given the Seminoles by the Government expired January 1, 1836. Agent Thompson declared that Micanopy, Jumper, Alligator, Sam Jones and Black Dirt were no longer chiefs. He himself had put them down. Osceola was seized and imprisoned by Agent Thompson—put in irons for six days until he promised to be peaceful. The traders were forbidden to sell ammunition of any kind to the Seminoles. Powder and lead was to be withheld from the tribe.

Seeing that the United States was determined to remove them from their country, in December, this 1836, the Seminoles struck their American enemy.

When the first of January neared, General Clinch made plans to round up the Seminoles. December 16 Major F. S. Belton of the Second Artillery, commanding officer at Fort Brooke not far from present Tampa of Tampa Bay on the Gulf of Mexico side, received the order:

"The general commanding the Florida district directs that upon receipt of this you immediately de-

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tach two companies of the troops at your post, outfitted for the field, with instructions to unite near the forks of the Ouithlacoochee (Withlacoochee) River with a detachment from Fort King, or else, failing of such meeting, to proceed on and await further instructions at that post."

There were only three companies of the Regulars at Fort Brooke. So Major Belton delayed obeying the order until the arrival of reinforcements from Key West. The first were forty men of Company B, Fourth Infantry, under Captain and Brevet Major Francis L. Dade.

From the Fourth Infantry men, and the men of Companies B, C and H, Second Artillery, and of Company B, Third Artillery, a column of one hundred rank and file was made up, in two companies.

Captain George Washington Gardiner of the Second Artillery was to command the column. He had graduated as Number 1 from the Military Academy in 1816, and was an accomplished officer. But in the night of December 23 his wife was taken quite ill. When at reveille in the morning, just before the column started, Major Dade heard of this, he insisted:

"You stay and care for your wife, captain. I'll go out in your place."

Captain Gardiner thanked him warmly. Major Belton consented to the change. The offer by Major Dade showed his good heart, for the march northward might not be pleasant; in fact it was likely to be very dangerous. It trended through swamps, and right into the country of Osceola and Chief Micanopy. The prin-

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## SEEKING THE SEMINOLES (1835)

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cipal town of the Seminoles, known as Micanopy's Town, lay near the forks of the Withlacoochee.

By the road these forks were about sixty miles inland, northeast from Fort Brooke. Fort King was fifty miles by road, on north from the forks. Without doubt an expedition was being planned against Micanopy's Town.

At six o'clock in the morning of December 24 (the day before Christmas), the Fort Brooke detachment started, under Major Dade. There were one hundred and two enlisted men, seven officers, one six-pounder cannon drawn by oxen, the baggage wagons, and a guide and interpreter, Louis, who was half Spanish and half negro.

Captain Gardiner remained behind, to spend Christmas with his sick wife.

Captain Upton S. Fraser of the Third Artillery served as field commander for Major Dade. He had entered the army as ensign in 1814, and was about fifty years of age—the same as Major Dade, who had entered the army in 1813.

The lieutenants all were young. The senior lieutenants in the column were Second Lieutenant William E. Basinger (who had charge of the gun) of the Second Artillery, and Second Lieutenant Robert E. Mudge of the Third Artillery. Lieutenant Basinger had graduated Number 2 at West Point in 1830; Lieutenant Mudge had graduated in 1833. So neither of them had worn the blue uniform very long.

The junior lieutenants were still younger. They were Richard Henderson of the Second Artillery and



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John L. Keais of the Third; had graduated as classmates, Numbers 12 and 14, from West Point only this June of 1835; had both been assigned as brevet or extra second lieutenants of artillery, and were two "shave-tails" upon their first campaign.

The other officer was Assistant Surgeon John S. Gatlin, appointed in August of last year.

Today the column marched only a short distance, and halted early to camp until the oxen had been traded for horses. The oxen would not haul the field piece. Major Dade sent a note back to the fort, requesting horses. Then in the evening who should come galloping on but Captain Gardiner himself. He had found a way to join, after all. How lucky that the column had waited! There was a transport sailing at once for Key West where his wife's relatives were stationed—and where the change of air would do her good. So he had stowed her aboard, and here he was.

That was true soldierly spirit. Major Dade of course had no notion of being relieved. Here he was, too; and they agreed to go on together with the column, Major Dade in command.

Horses instead of the weak oxen were put to the gun. The Spanish negro led. The trail was soft with sand and bogs; they did not arrive at the forks of the Withlacoochee until December 27, the fourth day's march. During the last two days they had seen signs that the Seminoles were watching them. But they did not know that the half-breed Louis was in the pay of the Seminoles and had told where the Americans were going; and they did not know that Chief Micanopy and

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## SEEKING THE SEMINOLES (1835)

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Osceola were only waiting, with all plans made to attack.

The detachment from Fort King was not at the forks. Major Dade continued up the trail, December 28. Beyond the forks, at eight this morning, the trail emerged from the swampy grounds into a harder, open stretch. On the left there were scattered pine trees and bunches of grass; on the right there was a large pond grown about with grasses and palmetto palms.

Nobody except Indians could have lain concealed at such a place; yet two hundred Seminole warriors commanded by Chief Micanopy were hidden like snakes in the grass and beneath the broad palmetto leaves.

It was a good spot for an ambush, because when the Americans were attacked from the right they would be driven into the open of the scrub pines and have no other shelter.

To Major Dade and officers the place did not look like an ambush place. There had been so many darker, thicker places. Captain Fraser and Lieutenant Mudge were in the advance, with a small party. Major Dade and the main column followed, with Lieutenant Basinger's six-pounder and the baggage wagons.

Osceola had expected to join in the attack, but had decided to strike at Fort King, instead. And while Micanopy's men were killing the column from Fort Brooke, the Osceola warriors were killing the hated Agent Thompson and others just outside of Fort King.

Chief Micanopy had told his men to wait for him to fire the first shot. They waited. He permitted the

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whole line to pass on until it all was within range from the palms and grasses. He made certain—he picked out the commander and fired and killed Major Dade instantly. That was the signal.

Major Dade's horse ran away into the midst of the Seminoles. They delivered a terrible volley; down fell Captain Fraser, dead; down fell Lieutenant Mudge, mortally wounded. The left arm of young Lieutenant Henderson was broken, both arms of boyish Lieutenant Keais dangled. Of the eight officers only three, Captain Gardiner, Lieutenant Basinger and Doctor Gatlin, were untouched. At least fifty of the rank and file were killed or wounded. The blow had been swift and sure.

Louis the guide was down, also—shamming.

Captain Gardiner took command at once. He found not a single coward in the detachment. No one ran; every man who was able obeyed orders, sprang behind a tree, along the road, and began to fight. The work was very hot. Surgeon Gatlin used a double-barreled shotgun that he had brought for hunting. Lieutenant Basinger unlimbered the six-pounder and turned loose with canister.

"Don't fire unless you see your mark, men," Captain Gardiner shouted. Perhaps he regretted having come when he might have stayed for Christmas with his wife; perhaps not. He was a soldier.

The Seminoles lay close; but now and then a head and shoulders were visible, in the grass and among the palmettos and pine trunks. The flint-lock muskets scored.

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## SEEKING THE SEMINOLES (1835)

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There was hard fighting for twenty minutes. The canister seemed to frighten the enemy; on a sudden the Seminoles broke, and disappeared behind a little hill half a mile in the northwest.

"Now, my lads! Quick! Save those wounded, doctor. Set a detail at work gathering cartridges, Henderson. Be prepared to move your gun, Basinger. We'll have to throw up breastworks, lads."

The words of Captain Gardiner were cheery. There still was no thought of retreat. While the wounded were being attended to and the cartridge boxes collected, the rest of the men felled trees. They hastened to pile the trunks into shape of a small triangle, near the road. But they had raised their breastworks only knee high when an alarm shout sounded—the Seminoles were coming back, over the hill and down!

"That will have to do, men. Deploy as light infantry," Captain Gardiner ordered. "Take what shelter you can and we'll beat 'em off."

The soldiers extended in skirmish line behind the trees, once more. Lieutenant Basinger opened again with his six-pounder. The battle was resumed. The Seminoles had come too soon.

The six-pounder, exposed outside the breastworks, boomed in vain. Scattered, the Seminoles stole forward from tree to tree and grass clump to grass clump. They formed a circle enclosing the whole little company. It was not long before all the men were forced inside the breastworks. Now they numbered only thirty, and four officers. Two of these officers were wounded. Poor young Lieutenant Keais could do

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nothing. His broken arms had been slung in handkerchiefs; he lay behind the breastworks, his head and shoulders bolstered by the logs. Lieutenant Henderson, his left arm helpless, loaded and fired a musket, resting it upon a stump, with his right arm—"kept up his spirits and cheered on the men" until he, too, was killed.

Lieutenant Basinger and gun squad stayed outside with the field piece until he alone was left alive; then, badly wounded, he crawled in.

Unluckily the breastworks had been built upon a spot which happened to be lower than the ground about it. Standing behind the trees the Seminoles could fire right into it. The brave Regulars were being picked off. Lying there, in line behind the low ramparts, they fought back from nine in the morning until two in the afternoon.

Lieutenant Keais had been killed at last, by a ball through the head. Lieutenant Henderson was gone. Doctor Gatlin had knelt with two double-barreled shotguns beside him.

"Well, I've got four barrels for them," he had said. Then a bullet silenced him.

Gallant Captain Gardiner had fallen.

"I can give you no more orders, my lads. Do your best," he had uttered.

The wounded Lieutenant Basinger and three privates were still active. The Seminoles ceased firing. The four soldiers, peering between the logs, saw them approaching. Chief Micanopy, a heavy man stripped and painted to the waist, was making a speech and point-

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## SEEKING THE SEMINOLES (1835)

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ing. The Seminoles were about to charge and finish the business.

"Lie flat. Don't breathe. Let them think you're dead," Lieutenant Basinger gasped.

That was done. In came the Seminoles, at a run. But they acted rather better than might have been expected, of Indians. They did not mutilate the bodies, except to take a few scalps. They stepped about carefully, gathering the guns and cartridges. They did not kill the wounded, and soon left, for the north.

Then a worse thing occurred. A horde of swamp blacks who had been abused by their former white masters rode up on mules and horses. They were like wild men. They plundered the fort, killed Lieutenant Basinger and a number of other wounded. They, too, left.

The three privates who had been overlooked remained alive. One of them, Private Wilson of the Second Artillery, could stand it no longer. He sprang up and made a dash. A Seminole who had stayed to watch shot him as he leaped over the logs.

The two other men, Privates Ransom Clarke and D. Long, lay flat until after darkness. At nine o'clock this night they decided to try for Fort Brooke. Private Clarke had been wounded in five places, and Private Long also could scarcely walk; but they set out.

The next day an Indian on horseback chased Private Long, and killed him. Ransom Clarke was three days in reaching Fort Brooke. He found that two comrades, who had escaped from outside the breastworks,

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had been ahead of him; they both had died. Out of the one hundred and ten officers and men he was the only survivor to tell the story of the great fight by the Major Francis Dade column, there in Sumter County, west central Florida, December 28, 1835.

It was over a year later—for the Seminoles had kept the United States troops very busy—when another column marched along the road past the battle field. The field was a remarkable sight. The story told itself. No bodies had been moved. Even the bones of the ox teams and the horses lay where they had first fallen. The skeletons of the advance squad could be counted; so could those of the main column, in the road and among the trees, fronting the enemy; and inside the breastworks there were the thirty, they likewise facing the enemy, in final lines, each shriveled form at its battle post.

Four wounded men, it was known, had escaped after the battle; three of them had reached Fort Brooke, two of these had not lived. All the others, one hundred and six out of the one hundred and ten—eight officers and ninety-eight men—were here by actual count.

They were buried in two graves, near the road; the six-pounder was hauled out of the swamp into which it had been thrown by the Seminoles, and was set up at the head of the trench, for a monument.

After the close of the Seminole War in 1842 the one hundred and six were removed to San Augustine. Another monument was erected, with solemn ceremony. And that the record of the Major Dade command shall

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## SEEKING THE SEMINOLES (1835)

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inspire the young soldiers of the Nation, a pedestal to Major Dade was placed at West Point Military Academy, inscribed to commemorate that battle of the 28th of December, 1835, "in which (it says) all the detachment save three fell without an attempt to retreat."



## CHAPTER VII

### BRAVE HEARTS IN THE ALAMO (1836)

#### NO SURRENDER AND NO RETREAT

**W**HILE in American Florida the Seminoles were standing out for home and independence, in Mexican Texas the Americans themselves were doing likewise. Tables had been turned.

Beginning in 1821 (the same year that Florida had been acquired by the United States), American settlers mainly from the South had moved into Texas, by permission of the Mexican government. The Texas lands were broad and fertile, and used not at all by Mexico. Thousands of acres might be had for nothing except the work of cultivating them.

In due time the Texas Americans found that Mexico was not to be trusted. They were being hedged about more and more by oppressive laws; were in danger of becoming mere subjects, and not free citizens. When they asked to be made a separate Mexican State, to be allowed to elect their own State officers, and write their own laws as provided for in the Mexican constitution of 1824, that was denied.

So in the fall of 1835 the Texas settlers rose to defend themselves against oppression. In southwestern Texas they won the skirmish of Gonzales, called the Lexington of Texas; they advanced upon the town of

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## BRAVE HEARTS IN THE ALAMO (1836)

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San Antonio, by a house to house fight captured it, December 11. In southern Texas there were victories. By the end of 1835 no Mexican soldiers remained in all Texas.

The Mexican government which was supposed to be a republic but was ruled rough shod by the dictator president, General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, prepared to subdue the Texas "rebels." Rebels they were, but they were fighting for their rights under the Mexican constitution.

After they had gallantly cleaned Texas, the American colonists, poor, brave, proud and hardy, did not pull well together. They chose State officers, but they divided as to the management of affairs. Sam Houston had been elected commanding general of the Texas troops. He issued orders that were not obeyed.

General Houston had served in the Regular army as lieutenant; he had campaigned with General Andrew Jackson against the Creeks; he viewed matters with a military eye. Texas was large, and thinly populated; as seemed to him, the little army was trying to cover too much territory. He directed Lieutenant-Colonel J. C. Neill, who was holding San Antonio, to destroy the fortifications there and march east with his artillery into interior Texas before he was cut off by a Mexican army.

Lieutenant-Colonel Neill replied that he was unable to move his guns—that he had no horses or oxen for the purpose; therefore he should stay. In fact, the Texans hated to give up one inch of Texas, and particularly San Antonio. Officers wrote to the governor,

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John Smith, protesting. Governor Smith and his council disagreed upon the methods to be used in carrying on the war with Mexico; General Houston's hands were tied by lack of support. It had been the same with General Washington, in that other war for American independence.

While the governor and the council were bickering, and General Houston appealed in vain for money and supplies, the garrison at San Antonio grew less and less. When Lieutenant-Colonel William Barret Travis arrived there in February, 1836, he found only about one hundred Volunteers; the others had gone home to put in their crops and to attend to their families.

This William Barret Travis was from North Carolina: was twenty-eight years old, six feet tall, slender and straight, round faced, blue eyed and red haired—a determined, sandy fighting man and thoroughly American.

He had been appointed from captaincy in the Volunteers to a lieutenant-colonelcy in the Texas First Infantry, regularly enlisted for the war. He brought with him to San Antonio, from his recruiting service on the way, some thirty new Texas Regulars. Those were all. His poor success in raising reinforcements worried him, but did not daunt him.

February 12 he wrote to Governor Smith, saying that General Sesma and two thousand Mexican soldiers were at the Rio Grande River boundary, only two hundred miles southwest, on their way to retake San Antonio.

"We are illy prepared for their reception," he said.

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## BRAVE HEARTS IN THE ALAMO (1836)

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"Yet we are determined to sustain our position as long as there is a man left, because we consider death preferable to disgrace, which would be the result of giving up a post that has been so dearly won."

And he added:

"With two hundred men I believe this place can be maintained, and I hope they will be sent as soon as possible. Yet should we receive no reinforcements I am determined; and should Bexar [which was San Antonio] fall, your friend will be found beneath its ruins."

This shows what kind of a man William Barret Travis was.

Colonel Neill was obliged to go home, on the day of the letter, by reason of illness in his family. Nevertheless Colonel Travis had brave hearts left with him.

Colonel James Bowie was there, sharing the command. Colonel Jim Bowie and his brothers Rezin and Stephen were well known in Texas. He himself had come out from Louisiana in 1819. He had been naturalized as a Mexican citizen. In 1830 he had married the Senorita Luz Veramendi, daughter of the vice-governor of the State of Coahuila and Texas; had a home in San Antonio and did a manufacturing business at Saltillo, the capital of the State, south of the Rio Grande.

Colonel James E. Bonham of South Carolina was there. He had known Lawyer Travis back in the United States; they had been boyhood friends and he had gladly followed Will to Texas. Now here they were together, for the defence of San Antonio.

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Young Lieutenant Almeron Dickinson was there. He had come in with Colonel Travis and recruits from his home in Gonzales, sixty miles east. Lieutenant Dickinson was not far turned twenty; had a pretty Mexican wife and a tiny baby; was just about to send for them to visit him and their relatives in town.

No less personage than Davy Crockett the famous Tennessee hunter arrived with twelve other Tennessee "buckskins." At this time a number of volunteers from the United States were making for Texas, to help their fellow Americans win out. Davy Crockett and his band had traveled straight for San Antonio at the Texas frontier, as the place where they would see action quickest. Davy had brought his long-barreled, silver-mounted rifle—his "Old Betsy." In their worn leather clothes and their coon-tail caps the Tennesseans looked fit.

They raised the garrison to one hundred and fifty officers and men. That was not many, in such a situation, for the Mexican troops were surely coming on.

San Antonio de Bejar (or Bexar, which is pronounced the same, Behar) was a very old town, located, as today, in the southwestern part of Texas, by shortest air-line about one hundred and fifty miles northeast of the Rio Grande River. It had been founded as a Spanish barracks in 1718, to protect the mission or church of San Antonio de Valero, near by, across the little San Antonio River on the east.

The mission de Valero was rebuilt in 1744 and named San Antonio del Alamo, but people generally spoke of it as the Alamo. Alamo is the Spanish word for

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poplar or cottonwood tree; and besides, a detachment of Spanish troops once stationed here were known as the Alamo Troop of the district of Parras.

In 1836 the mission del Alamo was vacant, and still about three quarters of a mile to the east of the town San Antonio de Bejar. A flat bare plain and the little river separated it from old Bejar. It stood by itself, like a battered fort, with only a few low adobe houses near it.

There was a large front yard, one hundred and fifty yards long and fifty yards wide, on the west side, toward the town, enclosed by a clay or adobe wall nine to twelve feet high and almost three feet thick. A row of stone rooms had been built on the inside of the west outer wall. The south end wall also had barracks rooms, projecting out; and along the middle of the rear side of the east wall there were two-story rooms, each opening through the wall by a door into the yard. These had been used as a convent.

The east half of the Alamo, back of these two-story rooms, was divided into smaller yards, for cattle, hides, and so forth, and contained the chapel, in the south-east corner. This chapel, of stone blocks, laid four feet thick, was seventy-five feet long, sixty-two feet wide and twenty-two feet high. Part of it was without a roof. It was set back from the big front yard, and had a yard of its own, enclosed by outer dirt embankments and the inner connecting walls.

Many of the barracks rooms built against the walls of the big yard had been pierced with loopholes by the Spanish and Mexican soldiery. They all opened into

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the yard; the doorways were reinforced inside with hide shields like breastworks, over which the soldiers might fire into the yard. But the rooms did not open into one another. They were cells.

Mexican troops had occupied the Alamo last December, before the capture of San Antonio by the Texans. They had surrendered their cannon, and had marched out. With garrison enough to man the cannon and the walls—the right kind of a garrison—the Alamo should prove very strong. But it was a large place to be held by a few.

Colonel Travis and Colonel Bowie quartered their handful of Texas Regulars, and their Volunteer cavalry and riflemen mainly in old Bejar, where they were well acquainted. They and the other officers and men had relatives and friends there.

By the rest of Texas San Antonio and the Alamo seemed to have been forgotten. But General Cos (who had been driven out of San Antonio) and General Sesma, with two thousand Mexican soldiers, were waiting just across the Rio Grande River. General-in-Chief Santa Anna, with four thousand Mexican soldiers, was marching up across the desert below the Rio Grande, to join them.

It was in the morning of February 22, Washington's Birthday, when two of the Texan sentinels, stationed upon the flat roof of San Fernando church at the Military Plaza in San Antonio de Bejar sighted the advance scouts of the Mexican army, in the southwest. They gave the alarm. Colonel Travis sent out two of his cavalry to reconnoiter. They came pelting back;

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they had seen a column of oncoming Mexican troops, and had been hotly pursued.

This was a surprise for the Travis and Bowie men. They had expected the Mexicans not before March. But Santa Anna had marched his troops hard, in winter weather, across the desolate hills and desert, five hundred miles of trail.

The garrison in Bejar had been at a dance; the men were scattered and still asleep. Colonel Bowie and Colonel Travis collected them in haste. All withdrew to the Alamo.

Young Lieutenant Dickinson snatched his wife and baby from a doorway, lifted them to the saddle before him and so took them along. On the way over the plain the column gathered thirty or forty cattle, and drove these in.

The Texas Americans might easily have retreated farther, in safety. They knew the trails eastward; the Mexicans could never have caught them. But they were too proud of their rights, to give ground while there was a fighting chance. They despised the Mexicans; had already thrashed them, and odds did not count.

The Alamo was the outpost of Texas liberty. The Texas flag waved over it. There were fourteen cannon, mounted upon the walls, with one on a platform in the center of the large yard. If gunners might be obtained, then with the support of the deadly rifles the Alamo should be held against all Mexico. The needed reinforcements might yet arrive.

This day and all the night the one hundred and fifty



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busied themselves strengthening the Alamo. The next afternoon, February 23, the first brigade of the Santa Anna army, fifteen hundred Mexican soldiers, entered San Antonio. Colonel Bowie had fallen from a gun platform and injured himself. That put Colonel William Travis in command. He ordered a shot from an eighteen-pounder to be fired toward San Antonio, as a challenge. He sent off a dispatch, by express rider, to Gonzales, sixty miles east. It was received there in the middle of the night of February 26.

Commandancy of Bejar.

Feb. 23, 3 o'clock p. m., 1836.

The enemy in large force is in sight. We want men and provisions. Send them to us. We have 150 men and are determined to defend the Alamo to the last. Give us assistance.

The little town of Gonzales passed the news on, and hastened to muster what able-bodied men it might, from the scattered houses and the fields. James Bonham, Colonel Travis' friend, was upon his way from the Alamo to Goliad, one hundred miles southeast. At Goliad there were Colonel James W. Fannin the Georgian, and four hundred and fifty Volunteers chiefly of the United States. Colonel Travis hoped to get them. He was pulling every string.

General Santa Anna followed his first column into Bejar. In the morning of February 24 he had his bugler orderly sound a parley; he sent a flag forward, with a staff officer, to offer terms to the Americans in the Alamo. The terms were unconditional surrender.

"I promise nothing to rebels; not even life," Santa Anna said.

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## BRAVE HEARTS IN THE ALAMO (1836)

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Colonel William Travis the slender red-headed warrior answered indignantly; and the spirit of his answer is shown in his famous dispatch, carried out into the east by the brave Captain Albert Martin of Gonzales.

Commandancy of the Alamo,  
BEJAR, Feb'y 24, 1836.

To the People of Texas &  
all Americans in the World.

Fellow-citizens & compatriots:

I am besieged, by a thousand or more of the Mexicans under Santa Anna. I have sustained a continual Bombardment & cannonade for 24 hours & have not lost a man. The enemy has demanded a surrender at discretion, otherwise the garrison are to be put to the sword, if the fort is taken. I have answered the demand with a cannon shot, & our flag still waves proudly from the walls. *I shall never surrender or retreat.* Then, I call on you in the name of Liberty, of Patriotism, & of everything dear to the American character, to come to our aid, with all dispatch. The enemy is receiving reinforcements daily & will no doubt increase to three or four thousand in four or five days. If this call is neglected, I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible & die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor & that of his country. VICTORY OR DEATH.

WILLIAM BARRET TRAVIS,  
Lt.-Col. Com'd't.

P. S. The Lord is on our side. When the enemy appeared in sight we had not three bushels of corn. We have since found in deserted houses 80 or 90 bushels & got into the walls 20 or 30 head of Beeves.

This dispatch traveled all the way to the settlement of Washington, one hundred and twenty miles beyond Gonzales, where the citizens of Texas were gathering in convention to declare for Independence. It was received on February 29; was read at the first meeting of the convention, the next morning, March 1.

It created much excitement. General Houston was

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## BOYS' BOOK OF BORDER BATTLES

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there as a delegate; but his powers as commander-in-chief had been limited by the quarrels between the governor and the council, and by the disobedience of officers. Texas had less than one thousand men under arms; the detachments were widely separated; the treasury was without money, the army without supplies. It was not only the Alamo that was in danger: from the south as well as from the west a Mexican host was likely to sweep through the country, and the settlers knew not which way to face in order to protect their homes.

At the Alamo Colonel Bowie now was desperately ill with typhoid pneumonia; he could not rise from his cot in the large hospital room of the two-story barracks next to the chapel. But he and Colonel Travis were agreed to fight to the end.

The flag above the walls was the Mexican tri-color, green, white and red, with the date 1824 in the center white bar instead of the Mexican eagle. Texas had not yet declared for independence except as a State. The date referred to that constitution of Mexico which guaranteed to the Mexican States a government of their own officials.

The Travis men made sallies, cleaning out the Mexican advanced posts and shooting down the cannoneers and engineers.

Colonel Travis continued to send dispatches. He announced that while the Alamo held out he would fire a signal gun at sunrise every morning. To a friend he wrote:

"Take care of my little boy. If the country should

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## BRAVE HEARTS IN THE ALAMO (1836)

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be saved, I may make a splendid fortune; but if the country should be lost, and I should perish, he will have nothing but the proud recollection that he is the son of a man who died for his country."

Captain John W. Smith and Captain Albert Martin, of the dispatch bearers, led in reinforcements of thirty-one men from Gonzales. They all freely sacrificed themselves—they ran the Mexican lines at three o'clock in the morning of March 1, with really no expectation of getting out again.

That gave Colonel Travis one hundred and eighty-three men, including the helpless James Bowie and the messengers who were being sent away.

Colonel Fannin, at Goliad, tried, with four hundred of his Volunteers. He started; his wagons broke down, his teams bogged, he could not get his artillery forward and he had few supplies. Besides, he was leaving the south open to invasion. So he turned back.

But the noble James Butler Bonham had not waited for him. As soon as he had delivered the dispatch asking aid and had obtained promise of help he had turned back.

"I will report the result of my mission to Travis or die in the attempt."

Bringing the encouragement, riding a buckskin horse and wearing a white handkerchief on his hat as a sign to his comrades, at one o'clock in the morning of March 3 he dashed through the Mexican lines and safely entered the gate of the Alamo. He was there to fight for and die with his friend.

The last dispatch from resolute Colonel Travis was

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## BOYS' BOOK OF BORDER BATTLES

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dated March 3 (this same day), and was received by the convention at Washington of Texas about eight o'clock Sunday morning, March 6. Captain Smith of Gonzales had brought it, again. He had ridden the one hundred and eighty miles from the Alamo in three days.

I am still here in fine spirits and well-to-do (Colonel Travis wrote). With 145 men, I have held the place against a force variously estimated from between 1,500 to 6,000, and I shall continue to hold it until I get relief from my countrymen, or I will perish in its defense. We have had a shower of bombs and cannon balls continually falling among us the whole time; yet none of us have fallen. We have been miraculously preserved.

Again, I feel confident that the determined spirit and desperate courage heretofore exhibited by my men will not fail them in the last struggle; and although they may be sacrificed to the vengeance of a Gothic enemy, the victory will cost that enemy so dear that it will be worse than a defeat.

A blood-red flag waves from the church in Bejar and in the camp above us, in token that the war is one of vengeance against rebels.

These threats have had no influence upon my men but to make them all fight with desperation and with that high-souled courage which characterize the patriot who is willing to die in defense of his country; liberty and his own honor, God and Texas; victory or death!

The Texas convention had declared for an Independent Republic, on March 2; it was drawing up a constitution and electing officers. Sam Houston had been chosen commander-in-chief again of the Texas army. He advised the convention to sit fast and finish its business, so that Texas should have a government. Without a government the war could not be carried on. He himself prepared to leave at once for Gonzales and relieve the Alamo.

There at the Alamo the Mexican troops had been

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## BRAVE HEARTS IN THE ALAMO (1836)

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pressing nearer and nearer. Santa Anna's full army had arrived. He now had five thousand well trained troops—infantry, cavalry and artillery, commanded by his best generals. They relaxed neither day nor night. The Texas Americans got no rest, while trying to guard all the points; knew little about serving artillery; depended upon their rifles, with which to hold the enemy off; saved ammunition, and with one hundred and eighty men covered a space that should have been defended by one thousand.

Colonel Travis had made a speech to them. He no longer had hope that reinforcements to amount to anything would be able to reach him, in time. He assembled his battalion; drew a line upon the ground with his sword.

"All of you who are willing to defend this place to the last, and if needs be stay and die with me, step to this line."

The dispatch bearers had slipped through the Mexican guards; other men might do the same. But every man except one stepped to the line. Colonel Jim Bowie had himself borne to it on his cot.

General Santa Anna had been losing cannoneers by the Texas rifles; every detachment sent to test the walls had been repulsed by bullet and grape. The Texans seemed never to sleep. His field-pieces were too light for breaching the walls. On March 4, after he had been besieging the Alamo for ten days, he held a council of his officers. Should the Alamo be stormed at once, or should they wait for heavier artillery and breach the walls first?

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## BOYS' BOOK OF BORDER BATTLES

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There was a discussion. He decided. He wished to move forward and conquer all Texas before the settlers had rallied. Enough time had been spent already with this little force of Americans.

"Gentlemen, we will take the Alamo by storm, between midnight and daylight of March 6."

There were to be four columns, numbering twenty-five hundred picked infantry, attacking on the four sides. They were to be equipped with scaling ladders, pick axes and crowbars, and led by veteran generals.

This night of March 5 the Mexican cannon ceased firing; the Mexican sharpshooters also ceased. It was a strange quiet, and the Travis men well knew what it meant. About midnight there drifted to them the dull tramp of marching ranks, the faint clank of weapons. The keen ears of men such as Davy Crockett, old Captain Albert Martin, and other scouts and Indian hunters read the signs. The Alamo made ready for an attack.

The air was slightly gray when at four in the morning, Sunday, March 6, a bugle pealed from the Mexican camp. The notes were instantly followed by the shrill cheers "Viva! Viva!" on north, south, east and west, and the thunderous tread of many feet.

With rifles and muskets cocked and matches lighted the Texan crack shots and gunners waited tensely. Where would the attack strike first? Hark! Listen to those Mexican bands! United in the south, where Santa Anna and his reserves were safely stationed, they played the dreadful tune of the "Deguello"—Throat-cutting.

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## BRAVE HEARTS IN THE ALAMO (1836)

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The masses of charging Mexicans, in dense column, loomed into sight, coming at the double quick. The column on the north side was making straight for a breach in the northeast corner of the large yard. Suddenly the Texan cannon upon the north wall opened crashingly; then the rifles and muskets flamed, every bullet told, the men reloaded, fired again, and again, and the column reeled backward, leaving a trail of bodies.

Now the west wall likewise was wreathed in smoke; the east wall and the chapel breastworks on the southeast had joined in the fray. The Texans had hard work to rush from point to point, serving the cannon and the small-arms. But the columns on the east and on the west recoiled; they could not face the music. Hooray!

While the fighting continued in the southeast, the columns upon the east and the west added themselves to the north column, and all together returned to the assault. Colonel Travis, at the gun mounted upon a platform in the northwest corner, raked the mass; the bullets were poured into it. The Mexicans broke, they fled wildly, their officers spurred among them, striking with the flats of swords—and even while the grimy Texans were cheering, the united columns came on, for the third time.

Alas, the hot rifles could not be reloaded fast enough; the cannon muzzles could not be pointed down far enough to clear the foot of the wall to which the Mexican officers were driving their soldiers with blows. It was a mob; many fell, the others pressed forward,



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## BOYS' BOOK OF BORDER BATTLES

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for they were unable to go back. They boiled through the breach, they scaled the wall and tumbled over the parapet like sheep. And Colonel Travis was dead—he had crumpled across the carriage of his gun, a bullet through his forehead.

The advancing wave of the yelling enemy had spread; it lashed against the west wall—it rose and flowed over; and on the east a stockade forming one of the yards of the chapel had been forced. The Texans could not be everywhere at once.

The large yard was being invaded from three sides; the fighting thickened to hand-to-hand, with gun butt and bowie knife matched against sword and bayonet. James Bonham had been killed. The heroic defenders were being shoved toward the chapel. The cannon upon the platform in the center of the yard is held to the last inch by Davy Crockett's squad. Twice, three times it belches its grape into the crowded Mexicans. Then it has to be abandoned. The Davy Crockett men, Tennesseans and Texans both, slowly retreat, swinging their rifles by the barrels.

Everybody who is able falls back into the convent or the two-story barracks which open into the yard, between the yard and the chapel. That is the second stand. The Travis cannon is seized and turned inward by the Mexicans. Its balls plunge through the barracks walls. The Mexicans storm the rooms. From inside, the Texans reply with their rifles, through the loopholes and the doorways; but they are separated into little groups, cut off one from the others.

With muskets and bayonets the Mexicans charge in

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## BRAVE HEARTS, IN THE ALAMO (1836)

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by the breaches and the doors. Many fall again, for the Texans in the rooms fight like tigers at bay; but there are plenty of Santa Anna soldiers to clamber over the red piles and wear the Texans down.

After a time the rooms all had been taken, except the last ground-floor room, at the end toward the chapel. This was the hospital. The Mexicans could not get in until they had wheeled a howitzer to the door and fired twice with grape. Fifteen Texans were killed but forty-two Mexicans lay dead outside.

Only the chapel remained. There were still a few of those Texas Americans. The chapel was rushed, from the front. Now Davy Crockett fell, while, covering the retreat, he swung Old Betsy in the little front yard of the chapel until he had no more space and bayonets and bullets struck him to the trampled earth. It is said that a ring of heaped-up Mexicans surrounded him.

Jim Bowie had been moved from the hospital to a small room formed by an arch of the chapel entrance. He heard the tumult, he raved to get up and out, but the fever had weakened him so that he could scarcely raise his head. He had his pair of pistols lying cocked and ready upon his coverlet; his knife was bared. Thus he waited. A Mexican woman, the Señora Candelaria, his friend, was nursing him. She died, aged one hundred and fourteen, in San Antonio in 1899; she long remembered that terrible morning.

She lifted Colonel Bowie's heavy head into her lap, and in vain would have saved him. The fierce faces of the Mexican soldiers peered into the room. They knew Jim Bowie; and weak as he was, they did not dare ap-

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proach within his reach. They shot at him, from the door; he replied with his pistols, and his balls told. He did not ask for quarter—he wished no quarter. The Mexicans dodged hither and thither; they feared his pistols, they feared his knife, they swarmed upon him, stabbing at long distance with their bayonets while the Señora Candelaria shielded him. Then a musket ball grazed her chin and pierced Jim Bowie's heart. Now he was gone, too.

Lieutenant Dickinson's wife was clutching her baby tight, in the arch room across from that of Colonel Bowie. She, likewise, had heard the battle-clamor. Suddenly Lieutenant Dickinson darted in, powder-stained and bleeding, for a goodby.

"All is lost," he cried. "If they spare you, save my child."

He ran out again, and died fighting.

In the east end of the chapel there was the powder magazine room. Colonel Travis had given instructions that at the last moment it should be blown up and the whole place with it. Major T. R. Evans, who commanded the artillery, saw that the time had come. As far as he knew, nobody was left but himself and the enemy. It should be an end and a decisive end. No quarter, the Mexicans had said? All right; no quarter.

He sped for the magazine, but a bullet stopped him. He had waited an instant too long.

Then from somewhere Private Walters, wounded, dived into Mrs. Dickinson's room. He was being pursued—the Mexican soldiers were hot after him. Mrs.

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## BRAVE HEARTS IN THE ALAMO (1836)

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Dickinson could not save him; they bayoneted him before her eyes. And now, two hours after sunrise of this March 6 the defence of the Alamo had ended indeed. At the same moment the final dispatch of Colonel Travis was being delivered to the Texas convention at Washington.

When the wind was right, the people at Gonzales had been able to hear the Alamo signal gun; but this morning they had heard, instead, the roll of musketry and the booming of rapid cannon. In time the sounds had ceased, and no signal gun had followed.

On his way from the convention Sam Houston had also listened; placing his ear to the ground, Indian fashion, every morning, before breaking camp. When he arrived at Gonzales he learned that no signal gun had been heard for several days. The Alamo evidently had been taken.

On March 11 two Mexicans from Bejar brought the news.

Of all the Travis and Bowie men only five were found alive by the Mexican searchers, after the massacre. They were led to General Santa Anna. General Santa Anna had not been in the attack; not he. His place as commanding general was only to direct, anyway. He well might have been merciful now; but when several of his officers suggested that the five Americans be kept as prisoners he turned his back with a scowl. At the sign, his soldiers used their bayonets.

The bodies of one hundred and eighty-two were piled up and burned. Mrs. Dickinson and her baby were put upon a horse and sent to Gonzales with a proclamation

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threatening the other Texas colonists. These two, and Colonel Travis' negro servant Sam, Mrs. Alsbury who was the Mexican sister-in-law of Colonel Bowie, her little daughter and the Señora Candelaria, were the only persons known to have been spared, in the Alamo.

"The obstinacy of Travis and his soldiers was the cause of the death of the whole of them," said General Santa Anna, "for not one of them would surrender."

Small wonder, when he had promised no quarter and was fighting Americans. He himself had lost between five hundred and six hundred men.

In after years the people of Texas erected a monument to the heroes of the Alamo. It stands upon the capitol grounds at Austin. The four sides contain the names of one hundred and sixty who were known, headed by the names of W. B. Travis, James Bowie, J. B. Bonham, David Crockett.

The inscription on the west side says: "Heroes of the Alamo." The inscription on the east side says: "God and Texas. Liberty or Death." The inscription on the south side says: "I shall never surrender or retreat." The inscription on the north side says: "Thermopylae had her messenger of defeat, the Alamo had none."

The old chapel of the Alamo is today surrounded by the modern city of San Antonio; and there it is, for all to see.

## CHAPTER VIII

### VICTORY AT SAN JACINTO (1836)

“REMEMBER THE ALAMO!”

**G**ENERAL ANTONIO LOPEZ DE SANTA ANNA, dictator of Mexico, thought that when he had slaughtered the one hundred and eighty Texans at the Alamo he had killed the Texas cause. Now he would extend his fingers, close them, and crush all Texas.

He was a small, rather thick-set man, with sallow heavy face, glowing black eyes, coarse nose and mouth, and ambitions that stopped at nothing. He permitted nobody to oppose him. He styled himself the “Napoleon of the West.” He knew the Mexicans, but he did not know the Americans. Texas rose upon the ruins of the Alamo. Santa Anna’s victory there was really his defeat.

Now he prepared to march across Texas, with fire and lead and steel. At Gonzales General Sam Houston had four hundred men. They were armed with rifles, old muskets, pistols and knives. One company wore uniforms. That was the Newport Volunteers from Kentucky, commanded by Captain Sidney Sherman. The other companies were Texas militia and parties of other settlers, wearing homespun and buckskin, and drilled scarcely at all except as frontier fighters.

It was no use trying here to throw back the Santa

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## BOYS' BOOK OF BORDER BATTLES

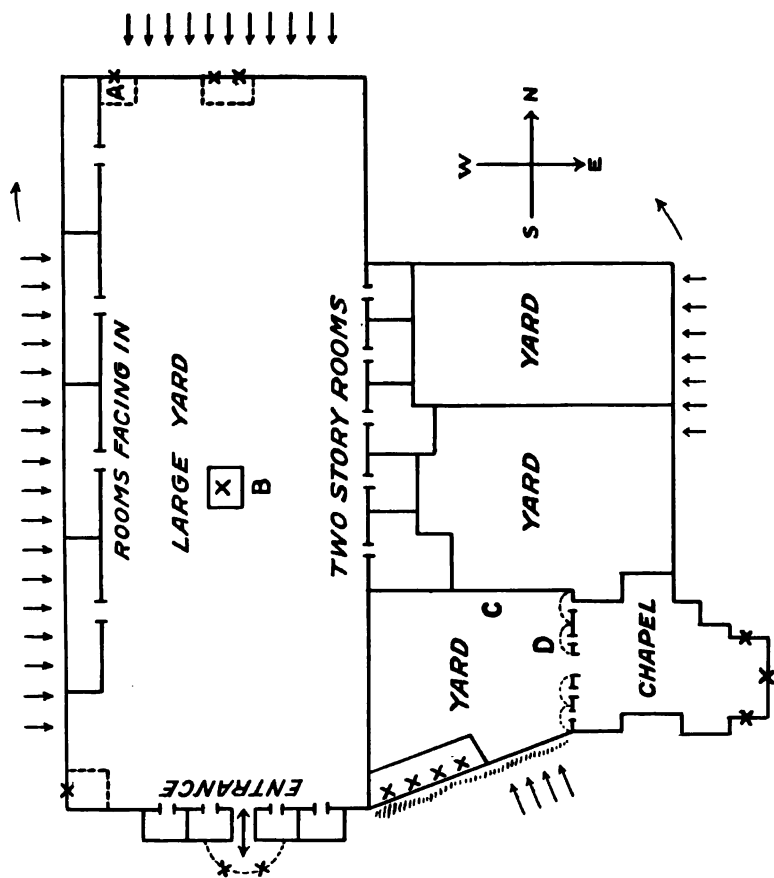
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Anna infantry, cavalry and artillery. In the night of March 13 General Houston abandoned little Gonzales. The people loaded what household goods they might, upon wagons; the three cannon were dumped into the river, for there were no animals to drag them; one wagon drawn by two yoke of thin oxen was the column's baggage train; the small army and the women and children left at eleven o'clock, Gonzales burst into flames behind them.

The retreat hurt. Instead of giving up their lands and homes to the red-handed Santa Anna, the majority of the Texans would rather have stood fast and fought it out, and have died like the Travis and Bowie men. But General Houston, planning a victory of a different kind, forced them back, back, back, through the rain and mud, to the Colorado River, fifty miles.

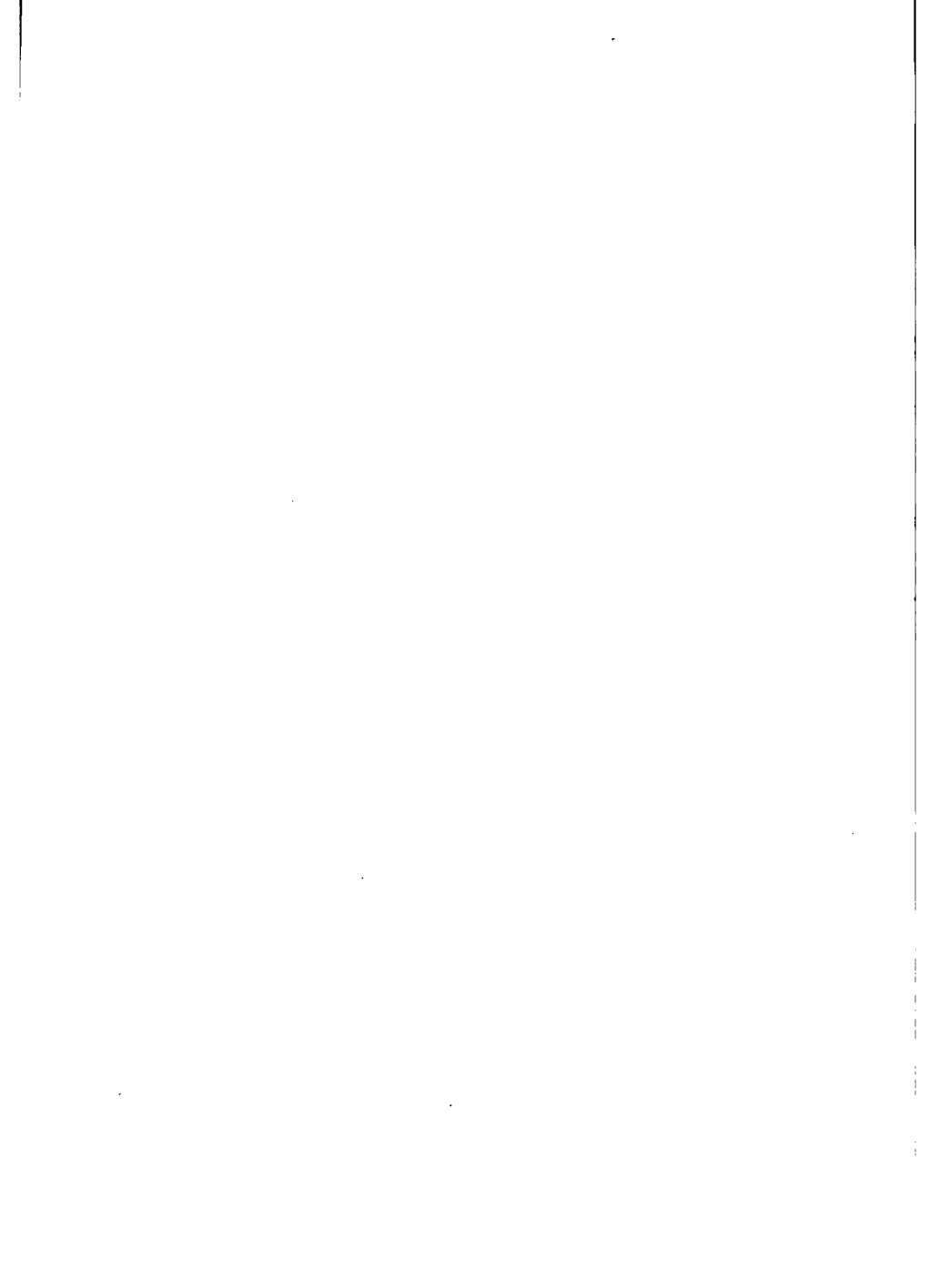
He expected to toll Santa Anna on; at the Colorado River he would get reinforcements, Colonel Fannin might be able to join with him, from the south; all together they would whip Santa Anna. But at the Colorado he learned that the whole of Colonel Fannin's army had been captured by the strong column of the Mexican General Urrea, marching up from the southern border.

The only American army in Texas was the few companies under General Houston and the recruits whom he would pick up. He still retreated. Santa Anna pursued, with three columns: one through the north, one through the center, one through the south. He himself led the center column, upon the trail of the Texas "beggars"—the hope of the Texas Republic.



PLAN OF THE ALAMO





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## VICTORY AT SAN JACINTO (1836)

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General Houston failed to receive cannon upon which he had counted. He had gathered twelve or fourteen hundred armed men—Regulars, militia and volunteers. They were hard to manage; they wished to make a stand and fight. Squads dropped out, to help their families move from the path of the on-coming Mexicans, or to protect their homes.

Santa Anna had sent word ahead that he would shoot every American found opposing him. The Texas government fled from Washington clear to the east coast. This spread fresh alarm. Rumors traveled fast. No one seemed to know just where the Mexican columns were. With seven hundred and fifty men, then with only five hundred men, Sam Houston continued to fall back.

His march attracted frightened settler families to it—a long line of refugees, old men, women and children. The rains were constant, raising the rivers and turning the roads into deep mud. Huge, gaunt and soaked through and through, clad in a thin black frock coat, snuff-colored baggy trousers, cowhide boots, and flapping big white hat, with an old sword in a plated scabbard tied about his waist by a leather thong, Sam Houston gave out of his own purse to the destitute, parted with all his extra clothes, put his shoulders to the wagon wheels, and promised that he would fight when he got ready.

Santa Anna hastened. When he heard that the Texas government had fled to Harrisburg, near Galveston Bay of the Gulf coast of East Texas, he took seven hundred and fifty soldiers and a cannon, and dashed

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## BOYS' BOOK OF BORDER BATTLES

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to seize Harrisburg—perhaps to capture the Texas president. He entered Harrisburg in the night of April 15, and burned it. The Texas government was reported to be at New Washington, east on the shore of the bay. He followed eagerly, but President Burnet and his officials had escaped to Galveston Island.

General Santa Anna felt triumphant. He had marched clear across Texas from farthest west to the coast of the east, and no one had opposed him. He believed that by his massacres he had struck terror to the hearts of the Texas "rebels." They feared his very name.

The course of the Santa Anna soldiers had been almost straight eastward from San Antonio. But here at the lower Brazos River in south East Texas General Houston had turned north, up river. Santa Anna and his hurrying detachment had passed on; were fifty miles ahead. General Houston went into camp at Groce's Ferry, up the Brazos, to organize his little army and get news of the Mexican columns.

News, but terrible news, arrived. The surrendered Fannin command had been murdered—absolutely murdered by orders of General Santa Anna. They had surrendered to General Urrea upon written promise that they all would be sent home, on parole. The date was March 20. They had been marched to Goliad, or La Bahia—were to be released soon. "Ten days," General Urrea had said. They were chiefly gallant Volunteers from Tennessee, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, and Alabama.

General Santa Anna had learned of the surrender,

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## VICTORY AT SAN JACINTO (1836)

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and of the terms. "You will destroy them at once," he directed. "I am surprised that you have not done it before." On the morning of Palm Sunday, March 27, the three hundred and twenty-five were marched out in three detachments, and shot, stabbed and clubbed. Only twenty-seven escaped in the brush.

That was the end of the Mobile Grays, the New Orleans Grays, the Alabama Red Rovers, the Kentucky Mustangs, and all who had offered themselves to aid in the Texas fight for liberty.

Did General Santa Anna really think that by killing men he could kill liberty? How foolish! It had been tried before and it has been tried since, and it never has worked out.

General Houston's muddy camp got the news on April 2. The men were crazed with wrath and sorrow; they were fighting mad indeed—they wished to find the Mexicans at once. They did not know where the Mexicans' columns were; General Santa Anna did not know where the Texan army was. That was the situation.

The spies of Deaf Smith, famous Texan scout, brought word of the onward march of the three Mexican columns, six thousand soldiers, sweeping through the length of the republic. The center column under Santa Anna was striking the Brazos, below the camp.

On April 7 General Houston issued an order:

The moment for which we have waited with anxiety and interest is fast approaching. The victims of the Alamo and the spirits of those who were murdered at Goliad call for cool, deliberate ven-

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geance. Strict discipline, order, and subordination will ensure us the victory. The army will be in readiness for action at a moment's warning.

Firing was heard, from down river, where two of the Texas companies had been stationed. The Mexicans were trying to cross. General Houston kept his men in camp. He seemed to be letting the enemy cross and invade the southeast. There was talk of ousting him and making Sidney Sherman of the Newport Kentuckians commanding officer. General Houston posted notices, tacked with wooden pegs to the tree trunks.

"Any man who attempts to organize volunteers from this army will be court-martialed and shot."

Two cannon arrived at last. They were six-pounders, a gift from the people of Cincinnati, and were named the "Twin Sisters." The ammunition for them had been lost. Horseshoes, chains and other old iron were cut up and tied in bags, as canister.

April 12 camp was broken. The Mexicans of General Santa Anna had crossed the Brazos, to the south, and were getting ahead. With his Texans, General Houston also crossed. The men were glad to leave their camp of mud and sickness. They counted every moment spent there as wasted. Nevertheless they had been reorganized into two regiments, and drilled.

President David Burnet of the Texas republic sent General Houston a sharp note:

Sir: The enemy are laughing you to scorn. You must fight them. You must retreat no further. The country expects you to fight. The salvation of the country depends on your doing so.

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## VICTORY AT SAN JACINTO (1836)

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General Houston issued a proclamation summoning the settlers of East Texas to join him.

You have suffered panic to seize you, and idle rumors to guide you. You will be told that the enemy have crossed the Brazos, and that Texas is conquered. Reflect, reason with yourselves, and you cannot believe a part of it. The enemy have crossed the Brazos, but they are treading the soil on which they are to be conquered.

General Santa Anna sent a message of his own, by an old negro.

"You tell Sam Houston I know he is up there in the bushes, and when I get done with these land-robbers down here I'm coming up to smoke him out."

This was galling. The impatient men murmured boldly.

"If General Houston will not take us to meet the enemy, we'll elect a commander who will."

They still suspected him. They feared that he was trying to take them to the United States border in northeast Texas, and there wait in safety until he had gained reinforcements from the United States.

It was very evident that Santa Anna was down around Harrisburg and Galveston Bay. The size of his column they did not know; but that made no difference. Presently the road forked. One branch stretched eastward, for Nacogdoches of northeastern Texas, and the border; the other branch turned abruptly into the southeast, for Harrisburg and Galveston Bay.

No orders had been given. When the first company reached the fork General Houston was there.

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He had spurred up along the plodding files, and in his same old clothes he silently sat his bony horse. He had not shaved for a month.

"Which is the road to Harrisburg?" the officers of the advance demanded of Rancher Roberts, who lived here.

"This right hand road will carry you down to Harrisburg as straight as the compass."

"To the right, boys! To the right!" the officers shouted.

With a cheer the head of the column veered into the southeast. The single fife and drum played "Will you come to the bower?" which was the Texas battle hymn. General Houston uttered not a word. Watching the column forge by, he smiled happily. The men had done a great deal of talking; now their actions had spoken, and he knew that they were in earnest. He was sure of them.

He followed. Soon he overtook the artillery. The two cannon, dragged by ropes, were stuck in the mud. He dismounted, stripped off his coat, and shoved and tugged.

It was fifty miles of slow going to Harrisburg. On the second day, April 18, they arrived at the crooked Buffalo Bayou, which drained from the west into Galveston Bay. Harrisburg lay upon the other side; the south side. Harrisburg smouldered, but not a Mexican soldier was in sight.

Deaf Smith and the red-headed Henry Karnes, his comrade scout, crossed the bayou on a raft and captured two Mexican dispatch bearers. The two Mexi-

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## VICTORY AT SAN JACINTO (1836)

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cans were examined. They and the dispatches told the story.

The General Urrea column was far in the south. The General Gaona column was in the north. The main center column had halted at the Brazos, behind, but General Santa Anna was at Galveston Bay with seven hundred and fifty men, and General Filisola, in command at the Brazos, was to send him five hundred more men under General Cos.

Thomas J. Rusk, the Texas secretary of war who had joined as a volunteer, and General Houston had a talk together. But—

“We do not need to talk,” Sam Houston said. “You think we ought to fight and so do I.”

He called Colonel Burleson and Colonel Sherman, of the two regiments, to him.

“Have you beef on hand for three days?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Very well. You will see then that each man is supplied with cooked rations for three days, and hold the camp in readiness to march. We will see if we can find Santa Anna. Good evening, gentlemen.”

Buffalo Bayou, flowing swift and deep, separated the Texan seven hundred from the Mexican seven hundred at Galveston Bay. In the morning, after the breakfast of beef strips roasted upon green sticks thrust into the camp fire blazes, General Houston made a short address from horseback.

“The army will cross, and we will meet the enemy. Some of us may be killed, and must be killed. But, soldiers, remember the Alamo, the Alamo, *the Alamo!*”



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The speech was long enough; he had said all. They were until evening ferrying the infantry, the two cannon and one baggage wagon across by means of a leaky scow. The cavalry horses swam.

Now to the eastward only a few miles Buffalo Bayou curved into the north arm of Galveston Bay, called San Jacinto Bay. Just beyond its mouth, down into San Jacinto Bay there flowed from the northward the rippling San Jacinto River. Following up along the coast Santa Anna might cross San Jacinto Bay at its head, by Lynch's Ferry below the mouths of the bayou and the river; put the bayou again, and the river also, between him and the Texan army, and have a clear field before him in which to join General Gaona's column and ravage northeast Texas. Yes, and he and General Gaona hoped to enlist the Comanche Indians.

General Houston was determined that Santa Anna should not escape. The crossing at Lynch's Ferry must be secured. He took to the road between Harrisburg and Galveston Bay. He marched his column all this night, except for two hours' rest; the men stumbled with weariness, but they could not complain. In the darkness they clumped over a wooden bridge; the bridge of Vince's Bayou which cut the road and flowed northward into Buffalo Bayou.

At sunrise they halted on the south bank of Buffalo Bayou once more, to roast their beef strips. Deaf Smith and his scouts came galloping back, up along the bayou. The enemy had been sighted—was on the move!

“Fall in! Fall in!”

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## VICTORY AT SAN JACINTO (1836)

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Carrying their half-cooked meat, the men fell in. They hastened at best speed, down Buffalo Bayou, dragging the Twin Sisters. It was a race to Lynch's Ferry at the bayou's mouth. Thirty of the cavalry dashed on, to hold the ferry crossing.

The bayou was fringed with live oaks and magnolia trees, bordering a wet prairie. In mid-morning they rounded the last turn; the country before opened. They saw the marshes of San Jacinto Bay; they might see the bay itself, beyond, and Lynch's Ferry landing on this side, below the mouths of the Buffalo Bayou and the San Jacinto River in its north end. They saw the cavalry detachment waiting, but they saw not a sign of any Mexican soldiers. They had arrived in time.

There was good news. The cavalry had captured a flat boat loaded with supplies for the Mexican army and held in readiness to carry the Santa Anna column across the bay. The guard of twenty soldiers had fled.

General Houston at once posted his camp. He located it at the edge of the timber along Buffalo Bayou, upon high land of live oaks hung with Spanish moss. In front a little point ran out into a prairie two miles wide, of tall wild grass, with the salty marshes of the bay curving around its southeastern border. Six miles to the westward Vince's Bayou joined Buffalo Bayou; about at its middle was crossed by Vince's Bridge of the Harrisburg road, east and west.

So the Texas American army waited here, with Buffalo Bayou at its rear, San Jacinto Bay at its left,

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Vince's Bayou at its right. On its front the prairie was open, for Santa Anna to march in.

General Santa Anna had learned, at New Washington on the shore of Galveston Bay, in the south, that the Houston army had arrived. He did not know what to do. It was a surprise—it threw him into a panic. He remembered that Americans could fight, and that these Texans had a heavy score against him. But he was pocketed, with no escape.

He sent out his scouts; they failed to find the Texans. He decided to hasten and seize Lynch's Ferry; General Cos and five hundred troops were on their way to help him. He would then have the numbers.

At two o'clock this afternoon of April 20, 1836, he came within sight of the Texan pickets and the camp in the live-oak grove at Buffalo Bayou. His path was barred. The smoke of the camp fires curled lazily; a flag was floating—a new Texas flag, of white with a rich gold fringe.

This was the flag brought by Sidney Sherman's company of Newport (Kentucky) Volunteers. In the center of the white field there was the figure of Liberty. The presentation of the flag to the company had been made by Captain Sherman's bride. The top of the staff bore a glove, from another Kentucky girl, as a gage of battle.

Texas had adopted several flags, among them the famous Lone Star flag; but the white and gold flag, with the figure of Liberty, was the flag of San Jacinto.

The Texan position looked strong. Santa Anna

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## VICTORY AT SAN JACINTO (1836)

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formed line of battle; he advanced his cannon and his skirmishers to tempt the Americans into the open. His efforts were in vain. The Texans resisted, on the defensive, but stayed in shelter. General Houston declined to give battle except at his own choosing.

Santa Anna was disappointed. Although his army equaled the Texan army in numbers and surpassed it in equipment, he dared not force a fight. Therefore he withdrew a short distance to the eastward and encamped, himself, to wait for General Cos.

In his haste, and in the belief that General Houston was afraid of him, he selected a poor camp spot. He seemed to have lost his head, now that he no longer had the great advantage. At his rear there were a bog and a patch of timber, separated from the marshes of the bay by a muddy creek; his right rested upon the same creek and the scattered trees lining the marsh; his left was exposed, and covered by his cavalry; in his front he had only the prairie grass, with the Texan camp three quarters of a mile distant. If his army was doubled up it would be driven into the bog.

The Texans also were disappointed. They wished to attack at once, before General Cos appeared. General Houston shook his head under his big white hat.

"I could win a victory, by pursuing the enemy, but it would be at a great loss," he said. "While tomorrow I will conquer, slaughter and put to flight the entire Mexican army, and it shall not cost me a dozen of my brave men."

This night the Texans stayed in camp, double guards out. General Houston slept without a tent, beneath a

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single blanket, his head pillowed upon a coil of cannon rope. When he awakened, the sun was shining brightly into his face. He sprang up the last of all, but as large as life.

"The sun of Austerlitz has risen again," he uttered.

"The sun of Austerlitz has risen!" That had been the remark made by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1805, on a morning when he, too, had awakened to give battle against odds. The sun had burst through the storm clouds; he had greeted it as a sign of good fortune. This day he defeated the allied Austrians and Russians in the great battle of Austerlitz.

The Santa Anna Mexicans had fortified their camp with a breastworks of baggage and pack-saddles; the cannon muzzle pointed out through an embrasure in the middle. The day was April 21. As the sun mounted higher, and no orders were issued, the men in the American camp complained. There was talk that General Houston had planned a retreat, back across the bayou.

About nine o'clock Deaf Smith and party galloped in, bringing word that another body of Mexicans had been sighted. A long file of Mexican infantry and pack mules, coming from the west, disappeared behind a grassy hill of the prairie. They were the Cos reinforcements. General Houston called loudly:

"It is only a ruse, men. Santa Anna is simply marching his troops around yon hill, to deceive us."

But a great cheering and rolling of drums sounded from the Mexican camp, in welcome to the Cos five hundred. That did not frighten the Texans.

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## VICTORY AT SAN JACINTO (1836)

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Colonel William Wharton walked among the squads, clapping his hands and saying:

"Boys, there is no other word today but fight, fight. Now is the time."

This was cheered and heartily cheered.

Shortly before noon the camp had grown so impatient that the officers asked General Houston for a council of war. He put the question to vote: "Shall we attack the enemy in his position, or await his attack in ours?"

Now strange to say, only two of the officers voted to attack! Secretary of War Thomas Rusk declared:

"To attack veteran troops with raw militia is a thing unheard of; to charge upon the enemy, without bayonets in the open prairie, has never been known. Our present position is undoubtedly strong; in it we can whip all Mexico."

So now in the crisis the officers were not very keen, after all. Sam Houston's policy of delay seemed to be supported. But he was not satisfied. If the battle was to be won, it should be won by the men. He wished to find out how they felt. That he did. In his shabby clothes, his rusted scabbard dragging on the ground, he strode among them.

"Do you want to fight, boys?" he asked, from group to group. "Shall we fight, or wait? I know the opinions of the officers, but what do you say?"

"Fight!" they cried. "We want to fight. Lead us out, general."

He smiled.

"Very well. Get your dinners, and I will lead you

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into the fight; and if you whip them, every one of you shall be a captain."

He called Deaf Smith aside; went with him and Moses Lapham to where two axes had been concealed in the brush.

"Now, my friends," said Sam Houston, "take these axes, mount, and make the best of your way to Vince's Bridge. Cut it down, burn it up, and come back like eagles or that beautiful prairie grass will be crimsoned before your return."

Deaf Smith, the leathery faced scout, grinned.

"This looks pretty much like a fight, general."

He and Moses Lapham tore away. Denmore Reeves, John Coker, Y. P. Aylsbury, John Garner and E. R. Rainwater rode with them, to help destroy Vince's Bridge of the road across Vince's Bayou.

With Vince's Bridge down, the road would be closed. No reinforcements could come in quickly, no troops could get out quickly.

The Santa Anna army and the Texan army were to fight to a finish, as though behind locked doors. There could be no escape for either.

Vince's Bridge was about eight miles westward, General Houston waited, to make sure. The men did not know why he waited. They fumed at the delay. The sun sank toward the west. The Mexican camp was quiet. General Santa Anna believed that there would be no attack this day, if ever. He instructed the Cos reinforcements, who were tired out by their hurry, to stack their arms and sleep.

At half past three General Houston gave the com-

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## VICTORY AT SAN JACINTO (1836)

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mand: "Form double ranks, in order of battle." The time had come.

The Texas Americans numbered seven hundred and eighty-three. The Volunteers and militia were armed with rifles, the four companies of Texas Regulars with muskets. That made only two hundred bayonets. The seven hundred and eighty-three were to charge half a mile across the open prairie, upon breastworks defended by twelve hundred, perhaps thirteen hundred Mexican veterans—infantry, light musketeers, dragoons and a cannon.

Colonel Sidney Sherman, in his Kentucky uniform of light blue and silver lace, occupied left of line (next to the bay and the marshes) with the Second Regiment of riflemen. Colonel Edward Burleson's First Regiment of riflemen held the center; the Twin Sisters under Colonel George W. Hockley took position on their right, supported by the four Texas Infantry companies of Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Millard, bearing the white and gold flag in front of the drummer and fifer. At the farthest right there was the cavalry, commanded by the dashing Colonel Mirabeau Lamar, the Georgia newspaper editor and poet.

The line had been formed under cover of a timbered knoll out a little way in the prairie. General Houston sent orders to Colonel Lamar; the cavalry swept on at a trot, circling wide to cut off Santa Anna's left and draw his dragoons.

"Forward!"

The whole line forged around the timbered knoll, and down into the prairie again. The grass was waist high.



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General Houston, upon his horse, pressed close behind the center. The fife and drum struck up "Will you come to the bower?" The cannon horses tugged valiantly.

For some minutes not a sound arose from the Mexican camp. It was at ease. The dragoons were watering their horses, bareback; men were cutting boughs, in the trees at the rear, for huts; others were asleep—Santa Anna was asleep.

General Houston had chosen exactly the right hour. The Mexicans did not dream that anybody would be likely to attack them at the time of their siesta or afternoon rest.

The Texan line surged through the tall grass. The muskets of the Mexicans, stacked behind the breastworks, could be seen plainly. At two hundred yards the Twin Sisters were wheeled—from less than point-blank range they awakened the slumbering camp with a deluge of hissing slugs.

All was confusion there. The Twin Sisters limbered up; the Texan foot soldiers had broken into a run, out-stripping the guns. General Houston spurred back and forth behind the panting line, lashing with his old white hat.

"Hold your fire! Hold your fire, men! Wait for close quarters," he bellowed.

Everything depended upon one smashing blow.

One hundred yards, eighty yards—and here came Deaf Smith, from the west, his horse lathered, his seamed face streaked with grime and sweat. Right along the front he sped, flourishing his ax.

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## VICTORY AT SAN JACINTO (1836)

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"Vince's Bridge has been cut down! You must fight for your lives. Remember the Alamo!"

The great shout answered him:

"Remember the Alamo! Remember Goliad! Remember the Alamo!"

The breastworks were only sixty yards before. The Mexicans fired hastily with their muskets. The gunners were springing to the field piece. On the left, the Colonel Sherman riflemen already had entered the trees at the Mexican right and were fighting.

The breastworks delivered a volley; most of the balls passed over the line. It paused—"Crash!" All the rifles and muskets had spoken, together. The Mexican cannoneers were hurled from the field piece; the barricade was cleared of Mexican heads. The Texans charged, shouting. General Houston burst through, to the lead. The Mexican volley had shattered his right ankle and wounded his horse in the breast. The Twin Sisters were following at a gallop, unlimbered within seventy yards of the breastworks, but the infantry had piled over—were using their guns as clubs or else throwing them aside and wielding their knives.

"Remember the Alamo! Remember Travis! Remember Bowie! Remember Fannin and Goliad!"

General Santa Anna was crazed with fear. Those cries struck terror to his cowardly heart. He did little but run about, wringing his hands and shrieking foolish orders.

"Those Americans will shoot us all!" he cried. So he mounted a swift black horse and sped for escape by

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Vince's Bridge. But he, like others, found it cut down and partly burned.

General Castrillon, of Spain, his artillery officer, was braver. He tried to man the field piece; he faced the Texans; he gave way slowly, alone, until he fell pierced by bullets.

The Mexican right and left wings had been driven headlong; the center resisted only shortly. The dragoons scudded for the west and the bridge, pursued hotly by Lamar's cavalry. In the camp the soldiers fell upon their knees and lifted their hands and pleaded: "Me no Alamo! Me no Goliad!" But the Texans could not forget. General Houston and the other officers rode among them, begging them to cease killing.

The battle was ended at half past four. The actual fighting had lasted only eighteen minutes!

The Mexican general Almonte gathered four hundred of the soldiers in the salt marsh along the bay and surrendered them. Of the thirteen hundred and more Santa Anna men six hundred and thirty had been killed, two hundred and eight wounded, and over five hundred others taken prisoner. In fact, scarcely forty escaped! The Alamo and Goliad had been avenged.

The Texas loss was eight killed and twenty-three wounded. Now after the battle there was a great scene. General Houston's horse had dropped, but he had climbed aboard another, to ride back to camp. His boot was filled with blood from his wounded ankle. Throughout all the battle field the Texans were cheer-

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## VICTORY AT SAN JACINTO (1836)

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ing and dancing and shaking hands with one another. The general had issued orders in vain.

"Men, I can gain victories with you, but confound your manners," he growled.

They ran after him—they whooped, they jostled him and slapped him on his sound leg and his wounded leg, it didn't matter to them which, in their glee.

"Say! How do you like our work today, general?"

"Boys, you have covered yourselves with glory, and I decree to you the spoils of victory. I only claim to share the honors of our triumph."

This night the grove on the bank of Buffalo Bayou also was a wild scene. Huge camp fires were built. The men had pillaged the Mexican baggage—they put on fancy Mexican uniforms, decorated the horses and mules with gold epaulets and officers' sashes, and carrying lighted candles pranced in torchlight processions amidst the trees, singing and capering. They thrust the candles into the face of every Mexican officer—"Santa Anna! Hey! You Santa Anna!"

What with animals and provisions and guns and other supplies, and \$12,000 in silver from Santa Anna's military chest, the Texan army felt rich.

But still they lacked Santa Anna himself.

"You will find General Santa Anna dressed like a common soldier and beating a retreat on all fours," General Houston prophesied.

About two o'clock the next afternoon another prisoner was brought in, behind a Texan's saddle and guarded by two out-riders. He wore a blue striped cotton blouse, soiled white cotton trousers, and a private's

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leather cap. He had been captured while creeping on hands and knees through the grass near Vince's Bayou.

The Mexican prisoners herded between picket ropes clapped their hands and saluted.

"The general!"

"The president!"

So Santa Anna it was.

General Houston was lying upon a cot, his ankle bandaged. Santa Anna was taken to him.

"That man may consider himself born to no common destiny, who has conquered the Napoleon of the West," Santa Anna said grandly. "It now remains to him to be generous to the vanquished."

"You should have remembered that at the Alamo, sir," answered Sam Houston.

"I was justified in my course by the usages of war," said Santa Anna. "I had summoned a surrender and they had refused. The place was then taken by storm, and by the custom of war I was justified in destroying them."

"That is no longer the custom among civilized nations," answered Sam Houston.

"I was acting under the orders of my Government," said Santa Anna.

"Why," Sam Houston replied, "you are the government of Mexico! You have no superiors."

Santa Anna tried to explain away the massacre at Goliad, also. The Fannin men, there, had been killed after surrender. It was a different matter from that of the Alamo, and he needs must find another excuse. He said that he did not know that the Fannin men had

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surrendered; he pretended to be angry at Urrea; but this was all bosh. Nobody believed him.

"Why did you not attack us on the first day, before we were reinforced, general?" another Mexican officer queried, of General Houston. "We were ready for you, then."

"I knew that you were, sir," Sam Houston answered, "and that was just the reason I did not fight. Besides, there was no use in making two bites at one cherry. You talk about reinforcements?" And General Houston half sat up. "It matters not how many reinforcements you have, sir; you never can conquer freemen." He drew from his pocket a gnawed dry ear of corn. "Would you expect to conquer men who fight for freedom, when their general can march four days with one ear of corn as his rations?"

All the Americans cheered.

"Give us that ear, general! We'll divide those kernels and plant them, and call it Houston corn."

"All right. Take it and divide it as far as it will go. See if you cannot make as good farmers as you have proved yourselves soldiers. But don't call it Houston corn—call it San Jacinto corn, and then it will remind you of your own bravery."

"I see now," said Santa Anna later, "that Americans never can be conquered."

That was one reason why his life was spared: so that he should be convinced and should tell the Mexican officials under him. Furthermore, Texas had other use for Santa Anna. As president of Mexico he was obliged, by the terms offered him, to order General

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Filisola to retire from interior Texas, and he signed a treaty acknowledging the independence of the Republic of Texas. He was more valuable alive than dead.

## CHAPTER IX

### FACE TO FACE WITH MEXICO (1846)

#### IN THE AMERICAN ARMY AT THE RIO GRANDE

**A**LTHOUGH, after his capture by the Texans, President Santa Anna of the Mexican Republic had signed a treaty agreeing to the independence of the Republic of Texas, the Mexican government at home did not stand by the act.

Mexico said that he had signed while a prisoner, without authority. She granted him no powers, for peace; she refused to admit that the Texas Americans had strengthened their cause in the eyes of the civilized world by sparing his life when he deserved death for his bloody deeds. At the next national election he was defeated for president again.

Mexico had plenty of other presidents and generals. She continued to look upon Texas as only a rebellious province. There was skirmishing back and forth through almost ten years.

The Republic of Texas insisted that her western and southwestern boundary extended to the Rio Grande River. This had been allowed in the treaty with Santa Anna. Mexico held that as a Mexican province Texas extended merely to the Nueces River where it empties into the Gulf of Mexico one hundred and twenty miles this side of the Rio Grande. That cut Texas short by one hundred and twenty to six hundred miles.



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From her first year as a republic, Texas had wished to join the United States. When the annexation came up before the United States Congress Mexico objected stoutly. The fact that volunteers from the United States had aided Texas in her fight for independence was another sore point. Feeling ran high, on both sides. American citizens trading with Mexico, or living there, were illy treated; a number of claims for damages to American life and property were filed against the Mexican government. Mexico delayed payments, and broke agreements. Her word could not be relied upon, for she changed presidents frequently, by revolutions as well as by elections.

Finally, in March, 1845, the Republic of Texas was invited into the United States as a State. Mexico said that if she were "robbed" of her province, in this fashion, she would regard the matter as an act of war. Texas, however, had been recognized as a republic by other nations; and now Mexico consented to recognize her, if she would promise not to unite with any of them. But Mexico was too late. Texas preferred to become a part of the United States, and on June 23 accepted the invitation from Congress.

Thus the Lone Star State, largest of all the States, entered the Union. The great nation of the North Americans strode at one step to the Mexican boundary.

What was this boundary: the mouth of the Nueces River or the Rio Grande River? Nothing had been said upon the question, in the articles of annexation. Texas had come in simply as Texas.

The United States of course had engaged to defend

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its new State of Texas from attacks. Mexico had gathered troops along the lower Rio Grande, as if to invade and fight for possession. August 3 General Zachary Taylor landed fifteen hundred Regulars at the mouth of the Nueces River; he formed his camp at Corpus Christi on the farther shore of the Gulf, in the territory claimed by both Texas and Mexico.

Peace between the two nations was still being talked of. President Herrera of Mexico, a man with open mind, agreed to receive a United States envoy who should discuss this matter of Texas, and perhaps settle the boundary dispute. Mexico might be willing to release Texas to the United States, and retain the strip of land along the Rio Grande, as a protection against invasion; for it was a desolate country.

But when Minister John Slidell had arrived in the City of Mexico, after no little difficulty, to adjust the boundary dispute and also the damage suits, the Mexican congress declined to consider the damage suits at all. Another Mexican revolution occurred; President, Herrera was ousted and the unfriendly Don Maria Paredes was chosen.

That ended the business. President Polk at Washington was not caught napping. He had already decided to place troops at the Rio Grande, to prevent Mexican forces from crossing into Texas. The United States believed that it had rights there equal to the Mexican rights, until the controversy was proved.

General Zachary Taylor, "Old Zach," started his advance from Corpus Christi March 8, 1846, while Minister Slidell was waiting to be received by Mexico. His

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force at Corpus Christi had been increased to four thousand men, all Regulars. He was a brevet brigadier general, he ranked as colonel, and he had half the United States army. The armed troops of Mexico numbered thirty thousand.

General Taylor was instructed by the Secretary of War that he might call upon the States for militia; that in case of attack by the Mexicans he might cross into Mexico. But by the Constitution of the United States the State militia were not obliged to serve outside the borders of the nation. They were home guards. Therefore General Taylor had to depend upon the little Regular army alone until Volunteers had been sworn in.

It was a good army. During the seven months at Corpus Christi "Old Zach" had been drilling his regiments hard. Company for company the four thousand Regulars matched the best corps of Europe. Four-fifths of the officers were graduates of West Point—the best military school in the world. They knew their duties. Most of the officers not graduates had smelled powder in the war of 1812 and the Seminole War. The ranks were armed with flintlock muskets carrying three buckshot and a ball; could shoot and would obey orders.

General Taylor left about five hundred officers and men at Corpus Christi, to guard the port. Corpus Christi had grown from a straggling village to a crowded town of a thousand civilians. There were saloons, stores, and an American theater, of muslin tacked upon flimsy pine frames. Between duties the

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officers raced half-wild mustangs on the prairie, hunted the deer, the panther and the wild hogs. The Gulf weather was supposed to be balmy, but during the winter everybody suffered from the northers or sleety storms. Brush hedges were planted, to shield the tents and other quarters. All in all, when marching orders came the regiments were glad to move.

The three thousand five hundred in the marching column comprised seven companies of the Second Dragoons; four companies each of the First, Second, Third and Fourth Artillery; the Third, Fourth, Fifth, Seventh and Eighth Infantry. In these regiments there were officers due to become famous during the Civil War. The Mexican campaigns trained them.

The Second Dragoons were commanded by Colonel David Emanuel Twiggs, of Georgia, who had been appointed to the army in the war of 1812, had led the dragoons against the Seminoles in Florida, and was a burly, red-faced fighter. He gained high honors in the Mexican War, won the brevet of major-general in the Regular service; but in 1861 while yet an officer of the United States army he handed the district of Texas over to the Confederates, and was dismissed from the rolls as a traitor. Thus he blackened a bright record.

In the dragoons there was First Lieutenant Henry H. Sibley of Louisiana, who invented the Sibley army tent, and who at the opening of the Civil War resigned to become a brigadier general for the South. There was Captain William J. Hardee, of Georgia, who compiled the Hardee's Rifle & Light Infantry Tactics which were adopted by the United States army and were

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used for a time by both North and South. He also resigned in 1861, and rose to be a lieutenant-general for the South. And there was Second Lieutenant Alfred Pleasanton of the District of Columbia, who became a major-general for the North, and was a celebrated commander of Union cavalry.

In the Third Artillery there was First Lieutenant Braxton Bragg of North Carolina, who as full general in the Confederate army defeated General Rosencrans at Chickamauga, but was crushed by General Grant at Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge. And there was also First Lieutenant George H. Thomas of Virginia, who as a Union general was known as the "Rock of Chickamauga," and commanded the Army of the Cumberland.

In the Fourth Artillery there was Brevet Second Lieutenant Fitz John Porter, who was to command the Union Fifth Army Corps at the battles of Gaines Mill and Malvern Hill, and who was censured for disobeying orders at the second battle of Bull Run.

In the Third Infantry there was Brevet Second Lieutenant Bernard E. Bee of South Carolina, who as one of the most popular of the Southern brigadier generals was killed at the first battle of Bull Run. And there was Second Lieutenant George Sykes of Maryland, who as a Union hero of Gaines Mill and Gettysburg won a brevet of major-general.

In the Fourth Infantry there was plain Second Lieutenant Ulysses S. Grant.

In the Fifth Infantry there was Second Lieutenant Edmund Kirby Smith, of Florida, who became chief.

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of staff to the Confederate general Joseph E. Johnston, and rose to be one of the most successful of the Southern field leaders.

In the Eighth Infantry there was Second Lieutenant James Longstreet, who was called "Old Pete" by the Southern soldiers and achieved fame as a fighting Confederate general. And there also was Second Lieutenant James G. S. Snelling of Minnesota and Ohio, who served so gallantly in this Mexican War that Fort Snelling of Minnesota was named for him.

And in the topographical engineers there was Second Lieutenant George G. Mead, who with his troops won the battle of Gettysburg for the Union.

General Zachary Taylor himself was a sturdy commander. "Old Zach," his soldiers called him; and soon, "Old Rough and Ready." He did not object; rather liked it, for "rough and ready" was his style in camp and field. At this time he was sixty-two years of age. He had been born in Virginia but raised in Kentucky while Kentucky was the frontier. He loved the outdoor life; as a boy he had hunted and fished and had followed the forest trails. When seventeen he and his brother had swum across the broad Ohio and back, without pausing, opposite Louisville, in March amidst the drifting ice.

He had entered the army as lieutenant of the Seventh Infantry in 1808; had been a captain during the War of 1812; had won promotion from captain to major for his defense of Fort Harrison (the fort established by Governor William Henry Harrison in his march upon the Prophet's Town) against the Winnebago and Po-

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tawatomi Indians in the summer of 1812; had commanded in the Seminole War, in Florida, and had fought the bloody battle of Okechobee.

At the outbreak of the trouble with Mexico he had been in charge of the military department of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, with headquarters at Fort Jesup, of Louisiana near the Texas northeastern border.

Now in the field in Texas he represented that old type of army officer who cared little for uniform or ceremony, but battled stoutly. He wore a common straw hat or else a battered fatigue cap; a short linen coat, sometimes a draggled linen duster, and dingy linen pantaloons; rode a white horse of the "nag" order, and was fond of sitting it sideways, woman fashion. Anybody might speak to him; he answered a private soldier as readily as he would answer an officer. He was not a stickler for cut-and-dried discipline, but he was to be obeyed. Made few plans before a battle; studied tactics not at all; was a go-ahead fighter, handling things when he came to them, and quick to strike at the right moment. Knew no fear; wrote such short reports that the Secretary of War complained. "I put into them all that I have to say," Old Zach replied.

He had a wrinkled, weather-beaten face, an erect figure strongly built, short legs, long body, an alert manner, a bright blue eye, a high forehead, and a "farmer" look.

The troops, three thousand five hundred and fifty-four, with the dragoons of Colonel "Old Davy" Twiggs leading, and the two brigades of foot soldiers under

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Colonel (Brevet Brigadier General) William J. Worth of the Eighth Infantry and Colonel James S. McIntosh of the Fifth Infantry following, were twenty days in arriving at the Rio Grande River of southwestern Texas, opposite the Mexican town of Matamoros.

The march had been rather uncomfortable, across prairies of heavy grass and mesquite thickets and prickly-pear cactus, and desert stretches where the only water was salty. Nobody lived in that country.

At the Colorado, a stream part way, a Mexican force had appeared upon the western bank, and had warned General Taylor not to try passage or there would be a fight.

"As soon as I cut down this bank I intend to cross," General Taylor announced. "The first Mexicans that I see after my men enter the water will be shot."

He leveled the high bank, for his artillery and wagons; the men plunged into the water and waded through. But the Mexicans had vanished.

It was reported that the Mexican general Ampudia was on his way with five thousand soldiers to reinforce Matamoros, above the mouth of the Rio Grande. On the Gulf shore just this side of the mouth of the Rio Grande there lay the little Mexican village of Point Isabel or Frontone. The United States transports were to land the army supplies here. General Taylor took the dragoons and wagons and hastened down to seize Point Isabel before the Mexicans should cross and occupy it.

He was in time. He found the transports, but the village was abandoned and burning. This looked like war. He did not know whether war had been declared



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by Mexico; the transports did not know. A company of the First Artillery and a company of the Fourth Artillery were detached from the column in camp at Palo Alto, to reinforce the post. Major John Munroe, a hard-headed Scotchman who had graduated at West Point in 1814, was placed in command. Then with his column General Taylor had proceeded on from Palo Alto, through a fine country of oranges, cattle, quail and wild ducks (as well as rattlesnakes) eight or nine miles south to the Rio Grande opposite Matamoros.

Two bold dragoons, scouting too far ahead, were captured by Mexican cavalry. A boy bugler who had been with them came running back afoot, with the news. But except for this everything had gone like clockwork, although many of the soldiers were ill.

At one o'clock noon of March 28 the three thousand able-bodied Americans were paraded upon the bank of the Rio Grande, the Stars and Stripes were planted, challenging the Mexican flags across the river. The bands played Star Spangled Banner and Yankee Doodle. The dragoons' game cock flew on top of a baggage wagon and flapped his wings and crowed. The ranks gave him three cheers, for defying the Mexicans.

The Rio Grande River here, about twenty-seven miles above its mouth, was five hundred feet wide. The defenses of Matamoros, half a mile from the south bank, could be seen. They appeared strong, with several forts and breastworks, and considerable artillery.

General Mejia was in command there, with two thou-

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sand troops. General Taylor sent Brevet Brigadier General Worth over with a flag of truce and a note for General Mejia. General Mejia proved haughty. He refused to receive the note from anybody save General Taylor himself. He appointed General de la Vega, of his staff, to talk with General Worth.

"Has Mexico declared war upon the United States?" General Worth demanded.

"No, señor," said General Vega.

"Are the two countries still at peace, sir?"

"They are, señor."

"Then I wish to be taken to the American consul."

"That is impossible, señor."

"You decline to give me, an officer of the American army, access to the consul of the United States?"

"My instructions do not include your consul, señor."

"That is an unfriendly act, sir."

"I have no opinion to offer upon the matter, señor. But I would ask, is it the intention of General Taylor to remain on the left bank of the Rio Bravo?"

"Most assuredly, sir," replied General Worth, who was a veteran of the War of 1812 and the Florida War, and wore his uniform proudly. "And there he will stay until otherwise directed by his Government."

"The flag of North America has been advanced by you into Mexican territory, señor, and we view it with surprise and much displeasure."

"That, sir, is a matter of taste," General Worth retorted. "Just the same, there it will remain."

"Your attitude must be considered by Mexico as one of war," General Vega accused.

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General Worth laughed lightly.

"General Mejia may very easily determine when and where the war shall begin, sir. It will then be for the United States to say when and where it shall end. And I will add that the commanding general of the American forces on the left bank of the Rio Grande will view the passage of any armed party of Mexicans across the river as an act of war and will pursue a course accordingly."

General Worth stiffly saluted, turned upon his heel and, hot under the collar, went back to camp. General Taylor stroked his grizzled chin, while listening to the report. The Mexicans were commencing new fortifications, between the river and the town. He directed that his engineers construct a fort on his side.

The Mexican troops were paraded, to make a showing, full in view of the American camp. They were gaily uniformed, well equipped, and splendidly drilled. General Taylor himself was not much on show. All the citizens of Matamoros flocked in front of the town, to stare at the soldiers of "North America." There were elegantly dressed *caballeros*, and handsome women with flashing black eyes. The sprig young American officers lifted their caps and called, across the river: "Buenos dias, señoritas—good day, ladies."

But General Taylor was not here to palaver. He erected a heavy battery of four eighteen-pounders, pointed at the Matamoros plaza; a strong field fort, of earthen walls and sand-bag parapets, to hold a garrison of five hundred men, was being pushed, behind

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the battery. It was named Fort Mansfield, after Captain Joseph K. F. Mansfield of the engineers, who laid it out—and who afterward, or in 1862, as major-general of Volunteers was killed at the battle of Antietam. Fort Taylor and Fort Texas were other names for it. The two captured dragoons had been returned unharmed. They said that they had been well treated. But the Mexicans were crossing the river.

April 10 Colonel Truman Cross, assistant quartermaster general, disappeared. He had gone out for a little ride up the river, on his horse, and did not come back. Guns were fired to guide him in, if he were lost. Notes of inquiry were sent to the Mexican commander. General Mejia replied that he knew nothing of Colonel Cross.

On April 11 drums rolled, bands played, and bells rang, in Matamoros. General Pedro de Ampudia had arrived with a large body of Mexican Regulars. He took command, and forwarded a note to General Taylor.

“I require you in all form, and at the latest in the peremptory term of twenty-four hours, to break up your camp and retire to the other bank of the Nueces River, while our governments are regulating the pending question in relation to Texas. If you insist upon remaining upon the soil of the Department of Tamaulipas [which was the Mexican claim to that part of Texas], it will clearly result that arms and arms alone must decide the question.”

General Taylor replied that the United States Government had been trying for a long time to settle the

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boundary dispute; and that the American commissioner sent to Mexico had been refused. As for himself, he had been ordered to occupy the left bank of the Rio Grande until the boundary had been agreed upon by both governments, and he would be unable to retire.

Said Captain Bliss, General Taylor's son-in-law and assistant adjutant-general, to his fellow officers:

"Well, gentlemen, you may get ready. It's coming."

When the twenty-four hours were up, the little army of Old Zach was indeed ready, in order of battle. But the Mexicans of General Ampudia did not advance.

Second Lieutenant Theodorick Porter of the Fourth Infantry and First Lieutenant Stephen Decatur Dobbins of the Third Infantry, with ten enlisted men each, were detailed to search for the lost Colonel Cross. Colonel Cross probably had been murdered by Mexican guerillas under the bandit chief Romano Falcon. That was the belief, now.

Lieutenant Porter's detachment fell into an ambush by the guerillas, on the American side of the river. A rain had dampened the priming of the flintlocks; the guerillas unhorsed Lieutenant Porter, killed him and Private Flood with knives while the two were lying wounded and helpless on the ground. Lieutenant Porter was the son of the brave old Commodore David Porter, who had so gallantly defended the *Essex* frigate in 1812.

Next, the remains of Colonel Cross were found in the brush. He also had been murdered. This was

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now settled. The soldiers vowed vengeance for the cruel deaths of Colonel Cross, Lieutenant Porter, and Private Flood.

General Taylor blockaded the Rio Grande. The American squadron under Commodore Conner held the mouth and would not allow vessels to pass up for Matamoros. General Ampudia protested; he said that a blockade could be maintained only in time of war. And he said other things, of an insulting nature.

"Upon my arrival here I tried to arrange for peace. General Mejia would not receive my note. And you yourself have declared for war," General Taylor answered. "I consider your language disrespectful to my Government."

On April 25 there was another great celebration in Matamoros. A third Mexican general had arrived. He was General Arista, commander-in-chief of the Mexican Army of the North. He politely sent word that he was going to fight.

The Mexican forces in Matamoros seemed to wake up. Drums beat, bugles pealed constantly; at night signal rockets flared. It was reported by the scouts and spies that Mexican troops were being thrown across the river, both above and below the camp of the American Army of Occupation.

To learn what he might of that, General Taylor ordered reconnoissances. Captain Croghan Ker with Company K of the Second Dragoons was dispatched on a scout down the river; Captain Seth Thornton and Captain William Hardee with F and C companies, sixty men, were dispatched up the river. Their guide,

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a native named Chapita, who was thought to hate the Mexicans, deserted them. At the ranch of La Rosia, only sixteen miles from camp, they were surprised in a large brush-fenced yard by twenty-five hundred Mexican lancers and guerillas under General Torrejon. Captain Thornton leaped his horse over the eight-foot fence, but the horse fell and pinned him down. He was captured; Second Lieutenant George T. Mason and eight men were killed, two wounded. Captain Hardee had to surrender the remaining forty-six to the Mexicans.

General Taylor announced that war had actually begun on this April 26; he summoned Texas to supply him with four regiments of Volunteers.

He needed them. Captain Samuel Walker of the Texas Rangers and six men spurred in from Point Isabel. The Rangers also had found the enemy on this side of the river; on April 28 while out scouting toward Fort Mansfield had encountered fifteen hundred of them; had been driven back to the Point.

It was plain that General Arista was busy; was cutting off the American force, above and below. How many Mexican troops there were, General Taylor did not know. Five thousand, eight thousand, ten thousand? The little garrison at Point Isabel, twenty-three miles by road from the camp, was in great danger of attack; and an army of two to one, or three to one, supported by batteries, was likely to attack the camp at any hour.

Word of the defeat of the American detachments, and of the tight situation of the General Taylor troops

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soon reached the East. Excitement welled high. Recruits flocked to the enlistment offices in the large cities; Volunteer regiments were formed; the newspapers said that General Taylor had been overwhelmed—the Mexican troops had surrounded him and crushed him. The Government was much blamed for having given him only a small column, separated from speedy succor by three hundred miles of land and water travel.

Old Rough and Ready did his best. He had no fear but that his "boys" would stand by their guns, in battle. They were trained to the minute, were full of determination and eager for a fight. Now the situation was this: He had left four hundred and fifty men—most of them raw recruits—at Point Isabel, and his supplies were there. Possibly more recruits might have arrived, by this time. He had about three thousand men, able to fight, and several hundred invalids and camp followers, here at the Rio Grande, and Fort Mansfield was not yet finished. Rations were getting short. There were enough for only eight days. No wagons or boats could come in.

So he might stay where he was, and risk being bottled up by a Mexican army, while Major Munroe defended Point Isabel. He might retire beyond the Nueces, and wait for reinforcements. Or he might march back to Point Isabel, maybe through the Mexican lines, drive the enemy away from it, and get his supplies.

He was not going to lose his supplies and his recruits and his base. He certainly was not going to retreat. Therefore he decided to march to Point Isabel.



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Fort Mansfield was so far completed that it could give a good account of itself. The walls contained six bastions, the bomb proofs were under cover; two of the long eighteen-pounders had been mounted. General Taylor left for its defense the Seventh Infantry, Captain Allen Lowd's Company I of the Second Artillery, and Lieutenant Braxton Bragg's Battery E of the Third Artillery, all commanded by Major Jacob Brown of the Seventh, who had entered the army as a private in the War of 1812. He was a sturdy soldier and officer.

The fort sheltered the hospital cases and the camp followers, who included many women—laundresses and wives of non-commissioned officers. There were no tents; the eighteen-pounders lacked ball in quantity; the food might last a week, on a pinch; but General Taylor relied upon Major Brown to hold out.

"You will remain strictly on the defensive," Old Zach directed. "And expend no ammunition unnecessarily. In case you are being hard pressed you may fire signal guns with your eighteens and I will take measure for your relief."

At half-past three o'clock in the afternoon of May 1 General Taylor and his twenty-three hundred men marched east for Point Isabel, twenty-three miles by the shortest route across country.

From Matamoros the Mexicans watched him go. General Arista had been puzzled by the preparations. Was the American general about to retreat, or attack? The bulk of the Mexican army had already been thrown across the river and was gathered twelve miles below.

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General Arista recalled part of it, to strengthen Matamoros. Then General Taylor had marched toward Point Isabel. The Mexican column did not move again quickly enough to block him. He arrived at Point Isabel the next noon, without having sighted an enemy.

The citizens of Matamoros celebrated. They were certain that the American general had retreated.

"General Taylor dared not resist the valor and enthusiasm of the sons of Mexico," they proclaimed. "When our cavalry reached the place where they were to stop him, he had passed and was several leagues ahead. Great was the sorrow of our brave men. Why did not the Americans remain with firmness under the colors? Thus has an honorable general kept his word! Had he not said in all his notes that he was prepared to repel all attacks? Why then does he flee in so cowardly a manner, to shut himself up at the Point? The commander-in-chief of the American army has covered himself with shame in sacrificing a part of his forces, whom he has left in the fortifications, in order to save himself!"

At five o'clock Sunday morning, May 3, the heavy batteries of Matamoros opened fire upon Fort Mansfield. Reveille was just being sounded at Point Isabel when the dull booming of distant cannon rolled in from the west. The reports of the Major Brown eighteen-pounders could not be mistaken. Fort Mansfield was being bombarded, and was replying.

## CHAPTER X

WITH "OLD ZACH" AT PALO ALTO (1846)

"THE BAYONET, MY HARDY COCKS!"

ALL the camp at Point Isabel was excited by the sound. Officers and men collected in groups, discussing and listening. General Taylor issued orders to break camp at one o'clock and march for Fort Mansfield. Then about eleven o'clock the fire of the eighteen-pounders ceased. The fire of the Mexican bellying mortars continued; so there had been no assault.

Old Zach, a tough fighter himself, believed that the fort should be able to hold out for a time, against merely a bombardment. He was not yet ready to move—he had not loaded his wagon train with the needed supplies, nor finished the entrenchments for protecting Point Isabel. He resolved that he must play the game and take chances. So he countermanded his orders; but he sent Captain Walker, with ten other Texas Rangers, escorted by one hundred dragoons under Captain Charley May, to get word direct from Major Brown.

They left in the evening. Captain May and his dragoons returned at nine o'clock the next morning, May 4, their horses blown. They had sighted the camp fires of a large Mexican force posted near Palo Alto

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on the trail only ten miles out from the Point; had circuted the camp and gone on, until Captain Walker and his Rangers had ridden ahead to enter the fort. None of the Texans had come back to the rendezvous. After waiting all night the dragoons had given them up; had made for the Point again, had put one hundred and fifty Mexican lancers to flight, and were here to report that the route to the fort was held by the enemy in strength.

General Taylor hastened his preparations. The Mexican batteries were still pummeling Fort Mansfield. Today, May 5, Captain Walker and his Rangers appeared. They had entered the fort; it was all right and confident. That was good news. But on the way to the Point the Rangers had been hard pushed. The whole country seemed full of Mexican lancers and guerillas.

"We will march to the relief of Fort Mansfield at the earliest possible moment," General Taylor said.

About noon of the next day the eighteen-pounders began to fire signal shots. Old Zach listened grimly. The bombardment had increased. Officers and men worked furiously loading the wagons with ammunition and food, and helping Point Isabel dig in.

In the morning the orders were issued, at last.

"The army will march today at three o'clock in the direction of Matamoros. It is known that the enemy has recently occupied the route in force. If still in possession, the general will give him battle. The commanding general has every confidence in his officers and men. If his orders and instructions are carried out,

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he has no doubt of the result, let the enemy meet him in what numbers they may. He wishes to enjoin upon the battalions of infantry that their main dependence must be in the bayonet."

"The bayonet!" That was the certain weapon—the American bayonet!

At two o'clock this May 7 the column started. The progress was slow, across the soft prairie. There was a long train of heavily loaded wagons; there were Captain and Brevet Major Samuel Ringgold's Third Artillery battery of four twelve-pounder howitzers and Captain James Duncan's Second Artillery light field battery; there were two long eighteen-pounders in charge of First Lieutenant William Hunter Churchill of the Third Artillery; there were four companies of the Second Dragoons, three companies each of the First, Second, Third and Fourth Artillery, serving as infantry, except the battery men; there were the Third, Fourth, Fifth and Eighth Infantry.

The wagons were drawn by oxen; so were the Churchill eighteen-pounders. The regiments had been cut down by illness and lack of recruits. The United States had not prepared for war. Some of the infantry companies contained only sixteen men. In all, the column numbered two thousand, two hundred and eighty-eight.

This afternoon it marched only five or six miles and bivouacked for the night "beside a pond where the mosquitoes and rattlesnakes were so plenty that we could not sleep."

It was reported that the Mexicans had abandoned

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their position in the way; perhaps there would be no fight, after all. But the guns of Matamoros were booming, Fort Mansfield was now and then replying; Old Zach moved on carefully as well as hopefully. Fight or not, he intended to get through.

This noon of April 8, twelve miles out of Point Isabel the advance dragoons came scurrying back. The enemy had been sighted again—he was in battle array on the plain of Palo Alto or Tall Timber, scarcely two miles before.

"Now we'll have it, boys!" was the word from man to man.

In a few minutes more the column burst out of the thorny thickets that enclosed the route; arrived at a water hole and at the same time saw the Mexicans. There they were, on ahead to the south, extending across the road in a front a mile and a half wide!

"Look at them! Just look!"

"My stars, what a host!"

But Old Rough and Ready did not seem a whit alarmed. He had the column halted.

"Order—arms!"

By platoons, or half companies, the men were dismissed to the water hole, to drink and to fill their canteens.

"Column, attention!"

Old Zach went to work leisurely. He divided the column into right and left wings. The right wing was composed of the Fifth Infantry, Lieutenant-Colonel McIntosh, on the flank; next, the Ringgold Battery C;

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then the Third Infantry, Captain Lewis N. Morris; Lieutenant Churchill's two eighteen-pounders; the Fourth Infantry, Brevet Major George Washington Allen: all under Colonel Davy Twiggs, with Lieutenant-Colonel Garland of the Fourth Infantry as brigade commander.

The left wing was composed of the artillery companies serving as infantry, under Captain and Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Childs of the Third Artillery; Captain Duncan's flying Battery A of the Second; the Eighth Infantry, Captain William R. Montgomery: all commanded by Major and Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel William G. Belknap of the Eighth. General William J. Worth had gone home from the Rio Grande, to wait until a disagreement over his rank had been settled.

The wagon train was to be left at the water hole, defended by Captain Croghan Ker's squadron—Companies H and K of the Second Dragoons.

At two o'clock everything was ready. By heads of regiments, in columns of platoons, the American army advanced. Lieutenant Churchill's eighteen-pounders took to the road, in the center. The grass was shoulder high, and stiff and sharp pointed; the sun was hot. Old Zach occasionally halted the columns, for a rest, while he and his staff surveyed the enemy through their spy-glasses.

The Mexican array grew plainer. Within only half a mile of it General Taylor deployed his columns into line of battle, and halted again. What a splendid sight the enemy made! There appeared to be six or seven

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thousand Mexican troops, in gay uniforms. Their long ranks glittered with the lance tips of the cavalry, fluttering red and blue pennons; with the bayonets of the infantry, and now and then with the brassy sheen of a field piece.

Their rear was covered by the trees of the Palo Alto, which had thrived beside the shallow Rio Grande River when it flowed there instead of farther south. Their right rested upon a wide mass of chaparral or dense brush cloaking a ridge; their left rested across the road, upon a brushy lagoon or stagnant pond. The main portion of the army was east of the road, facing the American left.

The ground between the two armies was flat moist prairie, rife with the stiffly pointed grasses, and dotted with brush.

On account of the high grass the number of Mexican guns could not be figured out. The guns were concealed behind the front line of skirmishers. The gay army had ceased to move for position. It stood perfectly still. So did the lines of blue. The men in the blue ranks felt odd. It was a silence as of death. Could the two thousand American Regulars defeat those six thousand Mexican veterans? The American Regulars had fought the British, and the Indians; they never had met the Mexicans—but everybody knew that the Mexican army was well trained, by French methods, and had been in the field many times.

Captain May was ordered to take his two companies of dragoons and draw the enemy's fire—wake up the cannon, so that they might be located. The dragoons



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trotted forward, on a feint; but the enemy appeared not to see them.

Old Rough and Ready rode slowly along the American front. He wore a shabby snuff colored duster, and sat his horse with one leg hooked around the pommel—woman fashion. He paused before each battalion, and eyed it; said a few words.

“The bayonet, my hardy cocks! The bayonet’s the thing!”

First Lieutenant Jacob Edmund Blake of the topographical engineers now dashed out. He sped straight for the right of the Mexican line; approached to within one hundred yards—eighty yards. There he halted, and dismounting calmly swept the line with his glass. He was counting the cannon.

One volley from the Mexican muskets, and all would have been over with Lieutenant Blake. The American ranks held their breaths. But the Mexicans did not fire upon them. They acted puzzled. Two officers cantered for him, as if thinking that he bore dispatches. He paid no attention to them, and they also halted, to stare.

Lieutenant Blake was in no hurry. Presently he vaulted into the saddle again, dashed on, for the other end of the line, made a survey there, and returned in safety.

The Mexicans may have thought him crazy, but it was a very daring feat.

The Mexican army had twelve guns and six thousand men. It was commanded by General Arista himself. General Ampudia was serving under him. The right

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wing, of light cavalry, artillery, sappers, and the crack Tampico Coast Guards, was commanded by General La Vega; the center, of three regiments of the line, with cannon, was commanded by General Garcia; the left wing, chiefly of cavalry, was commanded by General Torrejon—the same who had captured the Thornton and Hardee dragoons at La Rosia.

For twenty long minutes the two armies had stood in line, fronting one another; and not a shot. The Taylor soldiers nervously chewed bits of hard tack, to moisten their lips; they talked low, wondering what was to happen. The majority of them never had been under fire. On a sudden a jet of white smoke spurted from the right of the Mexican line—a solid ball sent the dust flying, between the two armies. The ball had fallen short. Another followed, and another; by the half dozen they came. A few whistled overhead, but the greater number landed before; rolled and bounded through the grass. They were easy to dodge. The men coolly opened ranks and let them ramble on. That was a test of discipline.

"Batteries to the front!"

Huzzah! The Ringgold and Duncan guns and the Churchill eighteens forged into the open space, right, left, and center. The two yoke of oxen to either of the eighteen-pounders tugged stoutly—minded the cannon shots not in the slightest.

"G'lang, Buck! Spot!" their drivers urged. "You're fat enough. If you're killed you'll make good beef."

The guns were swiftly unlimbered and wheeled.

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The cannoneers had stripped to their red flannel shirts, had tucked up their sleeves and tied their suspenders around their waists.

The eighteen pounders were ready.

"Number One, fire!"

It spoke with a resounding crash, while the American soldiers cheered wildly.

"Too high, men," Lieutenant Churchill said. "Try another."

They tried with Number Two.

"Too low, men. Try again. The third time's the charm."

At the third shot Lieutenant Churchill sprang into the air.

"That's it, that's it, my lads! You have them now. Keep her at that."

Every ball from the eighteen-pounders was tearing through the mass of cavalry near the road upon the Mexican left. The Ringgold howitzers were throwing shell into the same cavalry with fearful effect. The Duncan six-pounders had joined in with solid shot. All the guns of either army were in hot action.

The Mexican gunners aimed at the American batteries; the majority of the balls still fell short of the line; they came bounding as before, and the soldiers dodged them. The American gunners aimed at the Mexican ranks, and did not miss. The solid shot opened broad lanes—sometimes tossed horse and man high; the shells blew whole squads to fragments.

Yet the Mexicans stood bravely. Each gap was quickly closed. The ranks acted like veterans—and

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veterans they were, of battles in Texas and in revolutions at home.

The Mexican advanced line of skirmishers had been driven helter-skelter back upon the main line. But there was no escaping that dreadful hail from the American guns manned by those red-shirted demons of "Yahnkees." Major Ringgold saw to this. He was an expert in field artillery, and commanded the two light batteries; encouraged the gunners—had them shift their aim from point to point, and directed them to select certain men as their mark. Thus they fired the cannon like rifles.

The infantry stood at order arms, watched and cheered. Old Zach was clearly getting the better of the Mexican generals. He did not attack; he simply held his ground and from the distance ripped the enemy's line to tatters. The Mexican artillery was more in number, but was no match in action. The fierce duel continued for an hour. Still the Mexican ranks did not break, did not give back an inch. They were indeed brave men, those Mexican soldiers.

Now they evidently had wearied of being shot at. And that was so: the ranks were appealing to their officers, either to be moved into the shelter of the trees, or else to be led forward to close quarters.

General Arista consented. General Torrejon, the famous cavalry commander, was directed to sweep out with his lancers and dragoons, a battery and a support of infantry, and turn the American right; pass around to the baggage train, if possible.

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Old Rough and Ready instantly saw the movement. The Ringgold and the Churchill guns centered upon the column—shattered it, but making its way through the chaparral it only swung wider and came on. The Fifth Regiment obliqued at the double to meet it; formed a square, and as General Torrejon delivered a volley and then charged on right and rear, one side burst with a frightful eruption of buckshot and ball which killed and wounded twenty of the lancers and sent the rest into the thickets.

Another portion of the Torrejon detachment had kept on, farther out, for the wagon train. The Third Infantry, panting through the heavy grass, headed it off. Lieutenant Randolph Ridgely and two guns of the Ringgold battery stopped the Torrejon guns.

All the field was filled with horses galloping riderless or bearing crouched lancers; with dead and wounded men and animals; with cheers and powder smoke and thunderous reports. The grass blazed up. The flannel powder-bags of the Churchill eighteens had set it afire. In a few minutes the space of prairie between the two armies was a broad sheet of flame; the pungent smoke drifted into the Mexican lines.

It was a terrible sight. The gunners could no longer see to shoot. The cannonading ceased, until the fire should pass. General Arista rearranged his line under cover of the smoke. He retired his battered left wing, and changed front in half direction. Old Zach saw. The road was almost clear, for the Mexican left had been resting upon it. So he promptly ordered the eighteens to be trundled down the road, and the artil-

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lery battalion, Captain Duncan's light battery and the Eighth Infantry to support, near the road.

By this movement the American right was advanced until it had occupied the place where the Mexican left had rested. It held the road, with its fresh battalions. The Mexican new line was facing the road, from the east.

The grass had burned off, in an hour. The battle broke out again. Old Rough and Ready stayed on the defensive. General Arista was forced into the attack, because the American cannon were once more shattering his ranks.

The Mexican artillery fire had grown accurate. It was being concentrated upon the eighteen-pounders in the road opposite the Mexican right. The Fourth Infantry was ordered up, to support the eighteens, at the rear. A solid shot sheared off the jaw of Captain John Page—carried with it the head of Private Lee and also pulverized his musket stock; drove one of his teeth into the back of Lieutenant Henry Wallen.

Ringgold's battery came in for a share. A cannon ball struck Major Ringgold in the right thigh, tore through his horse and out through his left thigh. Upon the ground, he waved his men to their guns.

"Don't stay with me, any of you. You have other work to do. Go ahead."

He had graduated from West Point in 1818, had studied in the military schools of Europe, and was the officer who had organized the flying artillery branch of the United States army.

General Taylor was sitting his horse, watching the

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work of the long eighteens and the howitzers. It was a dangerous spot.

"You had better retire a little, general. The balls are falling all about you, sir."

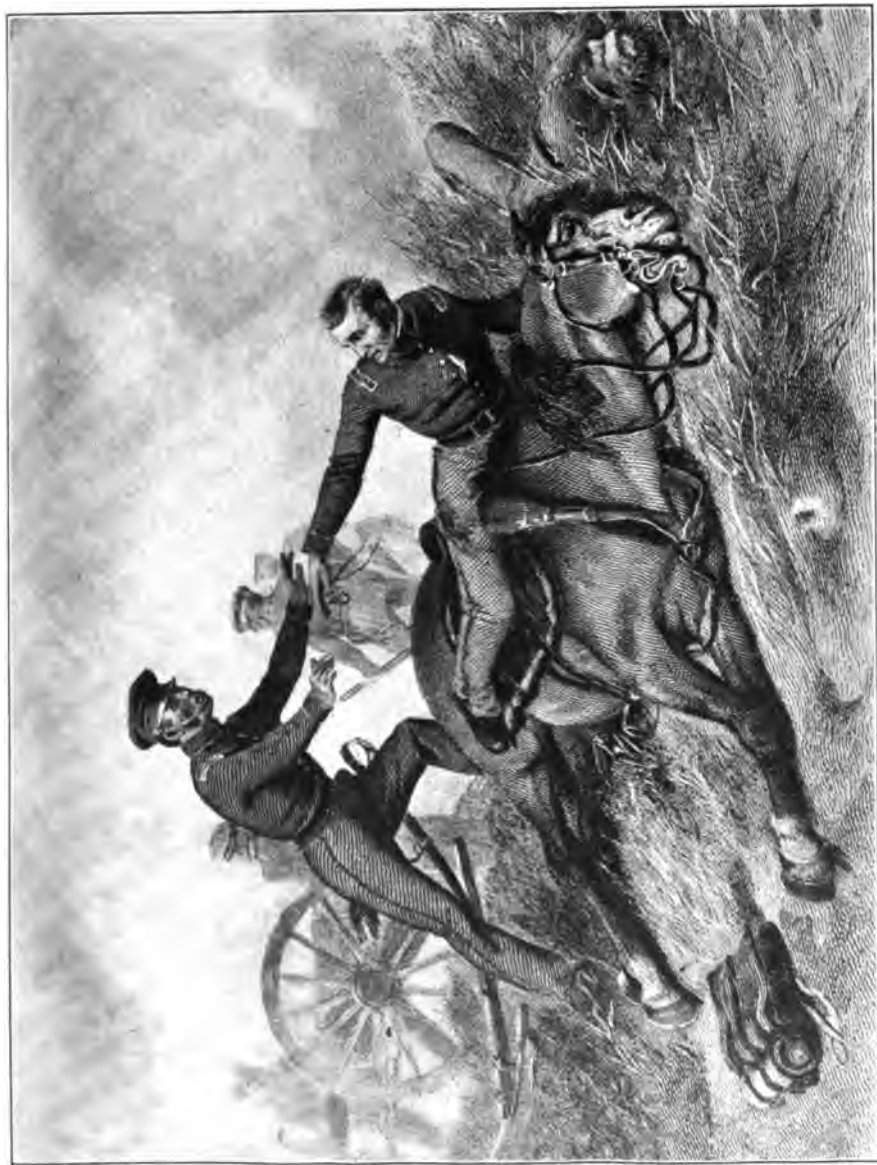
"No, sir," Old Zach answered. "Let's ride a little nearer and then they'll fall behind us!"

General Arista tried again to checkmate the fearful precision of those American batteries, and bring on close fighting. His men preferred musket balls and even bayonets to solid shot and to shell; their hearts were sore.

He detached the crack Tampico Coast Guard battalion, the Second Light Infantry, his sappers and part of his Seventh Cavalry, to charge under Colonel Montero, behind the fire of all the batteries, and break the American left; and at the same time General Torreon and cavalry, with a regiment of infantry, were to break the American right.

Captain and Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel Duncan had his battery well out to the front, toward the left. The air was clearer, here. He saw the Montero column—sent an aide to Lieutenant-Colonel Belknap, commanding, with the word; and he himself dashed like mad down the front of the line, his battery rumbling and tossing after. He rounded a point of burning grass right in the path of the Mexicans; alone with his battery of four guns he wheeled into action. It was a surprise for Colonel Montero.

With two guns the battery opened upon the cavalry, leading the column; with two guns it riddled the infantry, following through the chaparral. The four



MAJOR RINGGOLD STRUCK BY A CANNON BALL





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## "OLD ZACH" AT PALO ALTO (1846)

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guns vomited flame and smoke and canister. This one feat made Duncan's battery famous as a fighting unit.

The Mexican cavalry piled up in confusion; the infantry halted in the chaparral; Colonel Montero seemed not to know what to do. The Eighth Regiment, and Captain Ker's squadron of Second Dragoons from the wagon train hastened to the support of Colonel Duncan. Colonel Montero retreated.

But the charge on the right was making way, helped by the smoke. The eighteens, and the Ringgold guns now served by Lieutenant Ridgely, had not stopped it. The artillery battalion of Lieutenant-Colonel Childs was farthest on the right, around which the lancers of General Torrejon were swerving.

"Form square!"

The battalion formed square; the officers, including General Taylor's staff, were inside. Only Old Zach and his orderly, Sergeant Mickey Dowling of the dragoons, remained out.

"Come in, general! For Heaven's sake, sir, don't expose yourself."

But the staff called in vain, while the Torrejon ranks galloped nearer. Then said Mickey:

"Plaze, gin'ral, go inside. Sure, sorr, go inside or we'll all be kilt entoirely."

Old Rough and Ready looked at him, and without a word entered the square, with Sergeant Mickey waiting for him to go first.

The eighteens changed to canister; the Torrejon horsemen scattered; they could not out-face the storm. It was the last attack of the day. General Arista

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## BOYS' BOOK OF BORDER BATTLES

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slowly reformed his columns and withdrew in the dusk to the chaparral ridge on the southeast.

Guarded by double lines of sentries the General Taylor army bivouacked upon the bloody field. The officers and men, especially the hardworked red-shirted gunners, were very tired.

Their loss had been only four killed, three officers and thirty-nine rank and file wounded; but among the wounded Captain Page of the Fourth Infantry (Lieutenant Grant's regiment) and the gallant Major Ringgold were mortally injured. Fort Ringgold on the Rio Grande River in Texas bears the name of the gallant father of the United States celebrated flying artillery.

The Mexican loss was given out by General Arista, afterward, as one hundred and two killed, one hundred and twenty-seven wounded, twenty-three missing: total, two hundred and fifty-two. And almost all the casualties were from artillery fire. It had been an artillery battle, this first battle of the Mexican war. Bayonets had not been needed, but the Americans had won, opposed by position and by number odds of nearly three to one.

Fort Mansfield, eight miles south, had heard the battle din. Old Rough and Ready was marching to its relief—he had met the Mexican army—and with what result? Had he held his ground, or had he been forced back? The fort had been under bombardment for six days and five nights; Major Brown had lost a leg and was dying—

“Men, go to your duties; stand by your posts; I am but one among you,” he had ordered.

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## **"OLD ZACH" AT PALO ALTO (1846)**

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Captain Edgar Hawkins of the Seventh Infantry was in command—he had been summoned to surrender and had agreed with his officers to fight to the end. The signal guns were notifying General Taylor that Fort Mansfield still resisted; but if no reinforcements came—if the column of Old Rough and Ready failed to get through with food and ammunition, then the fort was doomed.

After dark tonight a runaway Mexican soldier entered. He said that the Mexican army had been defeated. All the garrison leaped upon the parapets and cheered and cheered. Let the enemy fire; Fort Mansfield would wait for Old Zach, who was surely coming.

## CHAPTER XI

### RESACA DE LA PALMA (1846)

#### AND THE CHARGE OF THE SECOND DRAGOONS

**T**HIS night the American army and the Mexican army camped within sound of each other. The Mexican army was concealed in the brush and trees. Soon after daylight the scouting dragoons and Texas Rangers reported that the enemy was marching southward toward the Rio Grande River.

General Taylor called a council of officers. What should be done? Follow, or stay here, or retire to Point Isabel. Fort Mansfield was still being bombarded; the cannon, eight miles distant, could be heard.

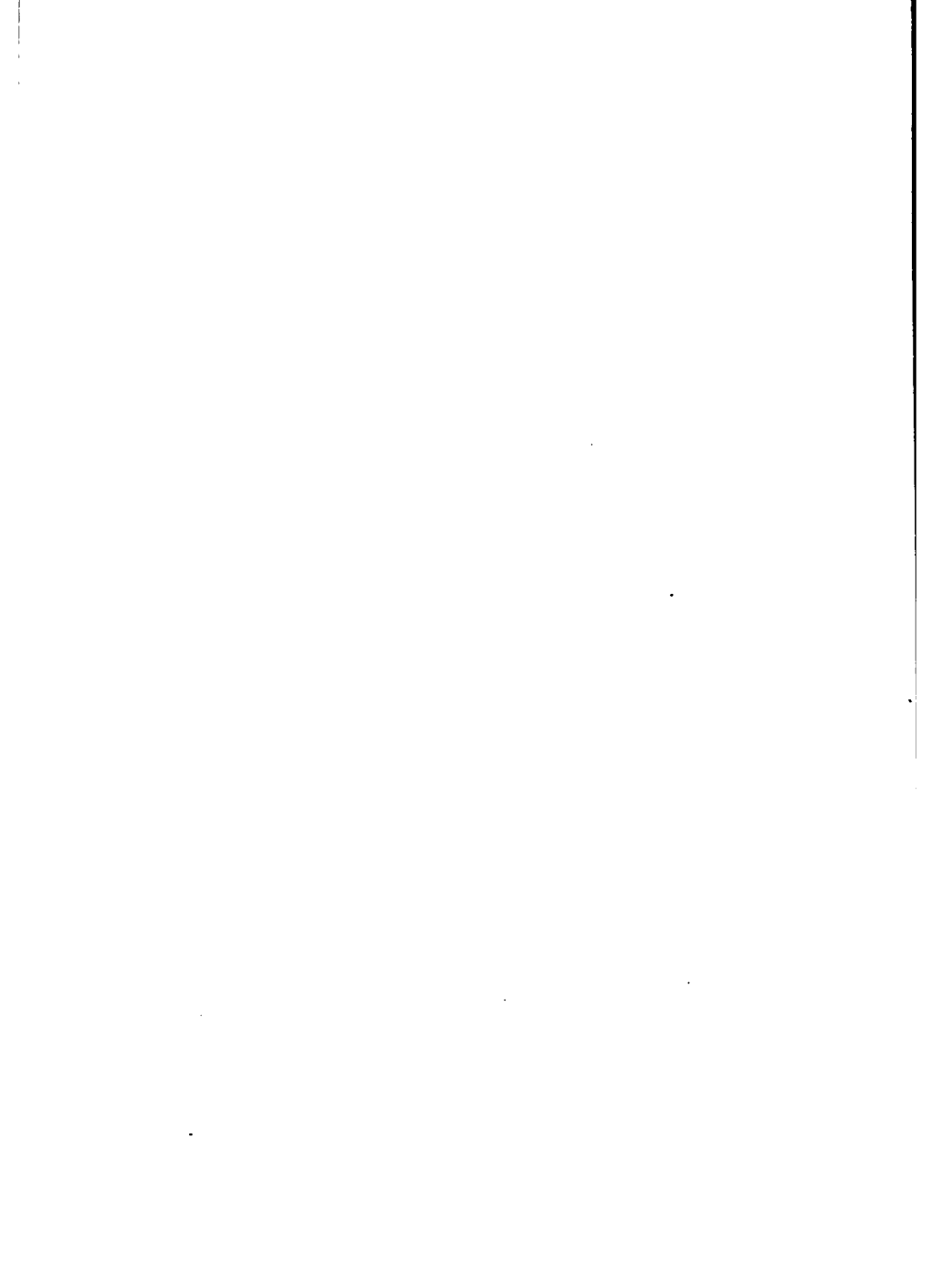
The majority of the officers voted either to entrench here and send back for reinforcements, or else to return to Point Isabel and form a new column there. Only two voted to advance at once. Old Rough and Ready decided.

"I shall be at Fort Mansfield tonight, if I live. We will go forward, gentlemen."

The soldiers were in fine spirits. They had whipped the Mexican troops posted three to one; they felt able to do it again. They had the morale—and in battle, morale or confidence is three-fifths of an army's strength. The morale was equal to a reinforcement of a thousand men.



THE SECOND DRAGOONS AT RESACA DE LA PALMA



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## RESACA DE LA PALMA (1846)

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The Mexican forces could be seen winding down the road, toward the river. General Taylor followed slowly. He sent his sick and wounded back to Point Isabel, under an escort of dragoons. The wagon train was parked inside a breastworks. Lieutenant-Colonel Childs' artillery battalion, the Eighth Infantry and two of Captain Duncan's twelve-pounders were left to defend it.

All this had taken time. The sun of April 9 was past the noon mark when the column advanced. Old Zach was a man who made ready before he acted. To-day he did not intend to be hurried. There was too much at stake.

The column soon crossed the position that the enemy had first occupied, the day before. That was a horrid place. The work of the American artillery had been terrible. Mangled men and horses were strewn everywhere; the grass was crushed and red; arms and knapsacks and clothing and provisions were scattered widely; wolves and buzzards had been feasting.

There were wounded, abandoned by their comrades. They cried out for water, and water was given them from the American canteens. But General Taylor moved on.

The Rangers and a detachment of the dragoons commanded by Lieutenant Alfred Pleasanton scouted in the advance. Two hundred and twenty infantry skirmishers followed, deployed through the brush. Captain George A. McCall of Second Lieutenant Ulysses Grant's company, Fourth Infantry, commanded these. That left young Lieutenant Grant to bring on the com-



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## BOYS' BOOK OF BORDER BATTLES

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pany. He thought it a great responsibility, and wondered what he should do, in battle.

Old Zach directed that the main column halt at a pond, drink and fill canteens. The brave Lieutenant Jacob Edmund Blake, who had been riding hard, got off his horse and unbuckled his pistol holsters, to rest himself. One of the pistols discharged; it mortally wounded him. He was the same Lieutenant Blake who had so fearlessly counted the Mexican cannon, the day before.

The chaparral proved very thick. General Taylor moved with great caution, to avoid ambush. About three o'clock word came from the scouting cavalry that the enemy had been found, at bay in a strong position a mile ahead, where a ravine cut the road.

"Captain McCall will proceed with his skirmishers, draw the enemy's fire and develop his position," Old Rough and Ready ordered.

That was done right speedily. A masked battery suddenly opened upon Captain McCall's skirmishers as they stole through the brush; wounded three men. He halted his line and sent word to General Taylor that he, too, had found the enemy.

General Arista had indeed retired down the road, about four miles from the battle field of Palo Alto. Now he had received reinforcements of two thousand fresh troops; with his six thousand again he had been waiting since ten o'clock, at the Resaca de la Palma.

His position was as strong as he could have wished. There was a ravine or dry water bed—the Dry Bed of the Palm—which crossed the road from amidst the

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## RESACA DE LA PALMA (1846)

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brush. It was of crescent shape, with the horns pointing north or toward the American army, and was four feet deep and two hundred feet wide. Its ends rested in ponds and swampy ground; brush surrounded it and fringed it. In front of it there were sharpshooters, lying low, out of sight; and a battery of three guns which from the left swept the road with cross fire. In the ravine itself there were infantry companies, protected to the breasts and resting their muskets upon the ravine edge. Behind the ravine there were two other batteries, of two guns each, posted on right and left and also sweeping the road; and more infantry. And in the rear of all there were the massed cavalry and a single gun.

General Arista thought that he had blocked the road. The Americans would not dare to attack, even if they came this far. He had unloaded his wagons, had unharnessed his animals; he had placed no reserve, to support him in case of need. He was here to stay. His fine tent had been stretched, and he sat in it writing dispatches announcing victory.

General Ampudia had said to their prisoner Captain Seth Thornton that a defeat was impossible; no force could drive them out. General Vega asserted that he considered the camp as safe as the City of Mexico; he would wager any amount of money that no ten thousand men could take it.

And the situation looked serious to Old Zach, when he arrived at half-past three o'clock, and from the rear of the Captain McCall skirmishers surveyed the defenses as best he could. Upon either side of the road

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the chaparral was dense, with only here and there a clear spot. He could not advance in line; he could not manoeuver in column. If he tried the road, his regiments would be wiped out by the fire of the batteries and the musketry.

But he was determined to pass, and he relied upon the intelligence of the American soldier.

The skirmishers had done well. By their accurate shooting they had driven the Mexican front line back to the ravine. Old Rough and Ready saw nothing to it but a regular Indian fight.

First, he sent Lieutenant Randolph Ridgely, with the Ringgold battery of the Third Artillery, forward to engage the enemy's batteries. The Ridgely guns ploughed gallantly through the brush, on the right of the road, to within three hundred yards of the ravine, and opened with canister and grape.

The Mexican batteries replied. They were served better than on the day before—the cannonading was fast and furious; but the American guns fired so rapidly that they gave the Mexican gunners no time for correcting their aim. Many of the Mexican balls passed too high.

General Arista sat in his tent writing his victory dispatches. His officers reported that the Americans were attacking. He said that it was only a skirmish and would not amount to much.

True enough, the cannonading was noisy but not so deadly as at Palo Alto. Lieutenant Ridgely's battery was masked by the high brush; his gunners failed to get good aim. However, General Taylor was not de-

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## RESACA DE LA PALMA (1846)

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pending, today, upon his artillery; his infantry soldiers were to show what they could do at close quarters. And glad they were, to go in.

The Third, Fourth and Fifth Regiments were deployed in extended order, on right and left, by squads. Little attention was paid to keeping in line; the squads rushed as they could, without commands—each squad following its captain or lieutenant or sergeant or corporal. In fact, the men fought about as they pleased. Only American soldiers could be trusted to do this. Every American soldier can think for himself, when necessary.

Now the chaparral on both sides of the road was filled with the little squads of shouting blue-coats. The thorny thickets were so heavy that the officers hacked with their swords, and the men pushed one another through, in football fashion. Squad lost sight of squad; the musket smoke hung bewildering; it seemed to be a confused man-hunt, but really there was no confusion; the scattered Americans pressed ever forward, firing whenever they glimpsed a red cap. Sometimes they were stuck fast in bogs, but they always got out.

The bold Lieutenant Ridgely advanced his guns, by rushes, to within two hundred yards, one hundred and fifty yards—one hundred yards. Duncan's battery and the Eighth Infantry were ordered up, to help him. The Mexican infantry in the ravine was giving way, the three Mexican cannon in front of the ravine were being silenced, but the four other guns were still thundering—there appeared to be no way of getting

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## BOYS' BOOK OF BORDER BATTLES

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at them or around them. The curving points of the ravine could not be turned without fearful loss.

The sun was low in the west, and the Mexicans were holding the road. The four companies, two squadrons, of the Second Dragoons had been stationed in the rear, waiting. This was no country for cavalry. Even the light Mexican lancers had done nothing, today. But Old Rough and Ready sent his aide to Captain May, of the First Squadron, Companies D and E.

Captain May came up with his squadron.

"Shall I charge them, general?" he asked eagerly.

"Charge those batteries, captain, *nolens volens*," directed General Taylor.

The Second Dragoons were troopers with a reputation for hard fighting in the Florida war with the Seminoles. Their discipline was perfect; no kind of country daunted them. Throughout the battle of Palo Alto they had sat their saddles, straining in vain, confronted by an overwhelming mass of Mexican cavalry, and condemned to watch the artillery batter the Mexican lines.

"Avenge Captain Thornton's command! Remember poor Major Cross! Remember poor Porter!" That had been the word passed from one to another. And now the time had come.

It was tough luck for the other squadron, the Captain Ker squadron, but no better leader could have been selected than Captain Charles A. May. He was a whirlwind—one of the best-known officers in the service. His reddish golden beard flowed to his waist; his bright hair flowed to his hips; tall and raw-boned,

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## RESACA DE LA PALMA (1846)

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he rode an enormous horse and wielded the heaviest of sabers.

At Baltimore, on a wager he had forced his horse up the long steep steps of the City Hotel, and then had turned and ridden him down again. In the Baltimore street before the hotel he had leaped his horse over a cord of wood. On foot he was awkward, but in the saddle he fitted.

Now his face glowed.

"Prepare to charge, men!"

The eighty troopers required no further order. In a hurry they cast aside every ounce of weight not needed; they stripped to their shirts, and rolled up their sleeves over their bronzed, muscular arms. They settled themselves firmly in their saddles, and gripped with their thighs.

"Draw—sabers!"

The bright blades flashed out.

"By fours, forward—trot—march!"

The eighty were to charge seven guns, in three batteries. Down along the road they thudded; they came abreast of the smoking Ridgely battery. Lieutenant Ridgely shouted.

"Hold! Hold on, Charley, till I draw their fire."

His guns spoke; the Mexican batteries answered instantly. Captain Charley May raised himself in his stirrups, and half turned, his great saber lifted.

"Men, follow! Charge!"

With a terrific yell, away they went. Captain Pike Graham and D Troop swerved to the left, for the two-gun battery behind the ravine, on that side. Captain

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## BOYS' BOOK OF BORDER BATTLES

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May and his E Troop galloped straight along the road, for the other two-gun battery. They say that his untrimmed beard and hair streamed like the tail of a comet. With him were First Lieutenant Zebulon Montgomery Pike Inge, Second Lieutenant George Stevens, and Brevet Second Lieutenant Delos B. Sacket.

Young Lieutenant Sacket, less than two years out of West Point, had forged to the lead. The musket balls were whistling.

"That's not fair, Sacket!" Captain May called. "You got the jump on me."

On his long-legged bay he passed Lieutenant Sacket. The cannon had been reloaded in haste. Just as E Troop bored in, the grapeshot hissed in scathing shower. Down lunged Lieutenant Sacket's horse, pitching him heels over head into a pool of water in the ravine and then falling upon him. But he wriggled out, scrambled to the top, ran on, seized a Mexican horse, grabbed a Mexican officer's sword, and pursued the galloping squadron.

Lieutenant Inge had toppled, shot through the throat while leading the first set of fours close behind Captain May. That one burst of grape had killed Lieutenant Inge, seven privates and eighteen horses; had wounded Sergeant Muley, nine privates and ten horses.

The squadron surged through the ravine, and up. Captain May vaulted his huge horse right over the two Mexican cannon; he swung his giant saber, cleaving a lane—the gunners shrank and fled; his men followed. The charge carried clear beyond the guns. What with

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## RESACA DE LA PALMA (1846)

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the men killed, wounded and dismounted, Captain May found himself with only six to rally. The Mexican cannoneers had closed behind him; the Mexican infantry bayonets threatened him on both flanks. He and his six wheeled; his saber rose and fell; the very sight of his tossing hair and long blade scattered the enemy. Again he reached the battery. One Mexican officer was there, trying to recall the gunners, and about to apply lighted match to a piece. A brave man, he. Captain May already had struck at him, on the charge in; now was upon him once more.

"Surrender, sir!"

The officer threw down his match and touched his breast, with a gesture of giving up.

"General Vega is a prisoner," he said; and he handed over his sword. It was General Diaz de la Vega himself.

The other Mexican battery south of the ravine had been carried by Captain Pike Graham, First Lieutenant Oscar Fingal Winship, Second Lieutenant Pleasanton and their Troop D. Corporal McCauley (who had been sword-master for the West Point cadets) and six men had galloped so madly on, down the road, through the Mexican line, that they had almost reached Fort Mansfield. When they returned, cutting their way back, they were only four.

But here at the rear of the ravine the battle was not yet over. Ridgely's Battery C had galloped forward again in the wake of the May dragoons; had halted at the very edge of the ravine. The enemy across was rallying to retake the guns. The dragoons were too



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few in number. Then on came the Eighth Infantry. It charged in column down the road, Colonel Belknap himself bearing the colors. Part of the Fifth Regiment joined it. The remainder of the Fifth, with the Third and Fourth, ran yelling through the brush, to cross the ravine at both ends. Duncan's battery hastened in, for shorter range.

In the brush Major James McIntosh of the Fifth had an adventure. His horse had been shot down. Then six Mexican soldiers sprang upon him. He had no time to draw his pistols from the holsters. Bayonets were stabbing at him; wounded him in arm and hip. The soldiers pinioned him from behind, and crossed two bayonets in his mouth. He knocked one out; the other pierced through, and out at the back of his neck. "I felt my teeth go," said Major McIntosh. He fell, and played 'possum until the soldiers left. Then he got up.

Duncan's battery plashed through a lagoon and arrived. Captain Duncan saw Major McIntosh; did not know that he was injured.

"Major! Can you support my battery?" he called. Major McIntosh turned, his face bloody.

"Yes, sir. I will give you the support you need."

"But you're wounded, major! What can I do for you?"

"You can give me some water, sir, and show me my regiment.

A soldier was detailed to guide brave Major McIntosh into the road. He charged on with his regiment.

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## RESACA DE LA PALMA (1846)

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The Eighth and Fifth crossed the ravine near the road. The crack Coast Guard Regiment of Tampico met them and fought with them hand to hand. Bayonet clashed against bayonet, musket butt encountered musket barrel. Such a hurly-burly, as again and again the mass of men surged back and forth! The Tampico Coast Guard broke. The Mexican soldiers threw their guns at the Americans, in despair.

"The Yahnkees are demons. They do not fight like men."

The Tampico color bearer tore the fringed silk banner, made by the Tampico women, from its staff, and wrapping it around him fled. Later he was caught by a dragoon and a foot soldier. He then had the banner in his hat. It was sent to the War Department and may be seen in the trophy cases today.

A portion of the Fourth Regiment waded a pond breast high, in the ravine; scrambled out and up, and ran on. The men burst into the General Arista headquarters camp. General Arista was not there, now, writing his dispatches, but much plunder was: in the large, handsome tent a silver table-service, and a fine meal half prepared, upon the table; elegant furniture, and a carved military chest. They forced the chest open; it contained rich clothing, and a full set of military maps—which proved very handy for General Taylor. Beef carcasses were hanging from the trees of the camp; savory kettles were simmering over fires; a train of pack mules was grazing in a clear space of two acres. This was a camp of comfort, very different from any camp of Old Rough and Ready.

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A Mexican officer, horseback, cantered near, just as the detachment was continuing down the road. Three times the Fourth Infantry men fired a volley at him, before he left. In a minute he came back, cutting them off with a bevy of lancers.

"Fall back, men! They're too strong for us." That was the cry.

The Fourth Infantry detachment slowly retired. The gay lancers charged. A volley emptied several saddles. But First Lieutenant Richard E. Cochran of Delaware, instead of retiring had darted behind a clump of bushes. The lancers rode him down, he parried the thrusts with his sword until a lance at last pierced his breast.

The lancers clattered on, led by the officer upon a splendid white horse.

"Shoot that man on the white horse!"

At the next volley the officer and horse collapsed; so did the Mexican who had lanced Lieutenant Cochran. The enemy scattered and pelted away.

It was the closing combat of the battle of Resaca de la Palma, in which seventeen hundred American soldiers of Old Zach had out-fought six thousand Mexican soldiers of General Mariano Arista. The battle of Palo Alto, May 8, had been a battle of artillery and of tactics—a generals' battle, with the American army on the defensive. The battle of Resaca de la Palma, May 9, was a battle of the ranks—a private soldiers' battle, with the American army on the offensive.

All the Mexican army was in wild retreat, pellmell,

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## RESACA DE LA PALMA (1846)

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down the road and south through the brush, for the Rio Grande and Matamoros.

The Croghan Ker dragoons, the Childs artillery battalion and the Duncan battery pursued. As the fleeing soldiers dived from the chaparral for the river-crossing near Fort Mansfield, the fort guns opened upon them. The one ferry, loaded to the guards, was swept by grape. Hundreds of the Mexicans were drowned in the muddy current. The rout was complete.

Fort Mansfield had been saved. It had again been listening anxiously to the cannon and musketry fire, only four miles distant; it had hoped, it had feared—when the foremost of the dragoons galloped for it, it received them with a spunky round of grape; and then it found out.

Its name had been changed to Fort Brown, in honor of the memory of Major Jacob Brown, who had died after losing his leg. For six nights and seven days it had been under the cross fire of three batteries. Only two persons had been killed and thirteen wounded by the two thousand seven hundred shot and shell, but everybody was worn out.

As an officer in Old Zach's field force said: "I would rather have fought twenty battles than have passed through the bombardment of Fort Brown," which today is Brownsville, Texas.

Back upon the field of Resaca de la Palma, General Vega had been delivered to General Taylor. Captain May himself handed the sword to Old Zach. The soldiers passed upon the way had presented arms, in salute to the captive. General Vega had raised his

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hat, in surprise. Here at headquarters General Taylor saluted, and extended his hand.

"I assure you I deeply regret that this misfortune has befallen you, general. I take great pleasure in returning you the sword that you have this day worn with so much gallantry."

That touched General Vega. He saw that he had met a chivalrous enemy.

"Your army was well handled, señor. It deserved the victory," he said.

"All my men are generals, sir," answered Old Rough and Ready.

In the Mexican camp the Americans were cheering, crazed with joy over their triumph. This night they bivouacked upon the spot, and fared well, with no longer any fears for the safety of Fort Brown. They were tired and the guns that had bombarded Fort Brown were silent—all Matamoros was reported to be in disorder.

The loss to the General Taylor army in the battle was three officers and thirty-six rank and file killed, twelve officers and seventy rank and file wounded. By General Arista's own returns the loss of the Mexican army was one hundred and sixty killed, two hundred and thirty wounded; but General Taylor believed that the total losses in the two battles numbered one thousand.

Besides, many prisoners including fourteen officers, almost all the Mexican artillery, three stands of colors, five hundred pack mules, and General Arista's personal baggage had been taken.

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## RESACA DE LA PALMA (1846)

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It was a blow for Mexico, and a stunning shock to the people of Matamoros. These Americans had proved to be a new type of fighters, who bided their time, gave away not an inch to threat and bluster, and came back like thunder-bolts. They feared neither noise nor numbers.

A Mexican poet wrote:

Rio Bravo! Rio Bravo!  
Saw men ever such a sight  
Since the field of Roncevalles  
Sealed the fate of many a knight?

Dark is Palo Alto's story,  
Sad Resaca Palma's rout;  
On those fatal fields so gory  
Many a gallant life went out.

On they came, those Northern horsemen—  
On like eagles toward the sun;  
Followed them the Northern bayonet,  
And the field was lost and won.

General Taylor issued General Orders No. 59:

The commanding general congratulates the army under his command upon the signal success which has crowned its recent operations against the enemy. The coolness and steadiness of the troops during the action of the 8th, and the brilliant impetuosity with which the enemy's position and artillery were carried on the 9th, have displayed the best qualities of the American soldier.

Prisoners were exchanged for Captain Thornton, Captain Hardee and the other dragoons. Having been reinforced, on May 18 Old Zach marched his troops across the Rio Grande, into Matamoros. Texas had been cleared.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE BATTLE OF ADOBE WALLS (1864)

#### KIT CARSON AS A GENERAL

**T**HE war with Mexico, over Texas, lasted until General Winfield Scott, who was called "Old Fuss and Feathers" and ranks as a great soldier, captured the City of Mexico, in September, 1847.

By the war the United States not only kept Texas, but gained New Mexico and most of Arizona, with Nevada, Utah, California, and Colorado west of the Rocky Mountain divide.

It took over the management of new tribes of Indians, also, who had been preying upon the Mexican and American settlers and really never had been managed at all. In Arizona and New Mexico there were the Apaches and the Navajos; in Texas the Apaches and Comanches, and the Kiowas who raided down from the Arkansas River in the north.

All these tribes had been accustomed to making forays clear into Old Mexico. The Navajos styled themselves the "Lords of the North"; the Comanches boasted that the Mexicans were good only to hold their horses for them; the Apaches were just as over-bearing, and the very name Kiowa spread terror. For many years, now, the American soldiers and settlers fought these desert and plains Indians, that the South-

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## THE BATTLE OF ADOBE WALLS (1864)

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west lands might be possessed by the white race in peace.

When the War of the Rebellion broke out, General David Twiggs, who has served so honorably under the Flag, surrendered his district of Texas to the South. The Confederate Government sent troops from Texas to occupy Arizona and New Mexico. At this time Arizona had not yet been admitted by the United States as a separate Territory; it still formed a part of New Mexico, and was settled by the white people mainly along the Mexican border. The pioneer Butterfield Southern Overland stage line ran here, on its way between Texas and San Diego of California.

The two or three United States army posts in southern Arizona had to be abandoned, for under the name Arizuma that portion of Arizona had joined the Confederate States. Then the Apaches saw their chance and swooped down, to plunder the stage portions and the ranches. They reasoned that if the white men could not keep peace with one another, what was the use in the red men trying. The Apaches hoped to get that country for themselves, again.

But the First California Volunteer Infantry under Colonel James H. Carleton marched in from the west, along the stage line, to drive out the Confederate soldiers and the Indians both. That it did. From the north the First New Mexican Volunteer Infantry of Colonel Christopher Carson marched down the Rio Grande, with other New Mexican regiments, to reinforce the Regular troops on the lower Rio Grande.

This Colonel Christopher Carson was the famous



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Kit Carson—trapper, Indian fighter, scout, and now a soldier. Like Daniel Boone, who had become a major in the militia of Kentucky, Kit Carson became an officer of the New Mexican Volunteers.

The invasion of the Confederate column from Texas was stopped and turned back, this same year, 1862; New Mexico, including Arizona, was saved to the Union. That left the soldiers free to attend to the Indians.

Colonel James Carleton was appointed brigadier general commanding the department of New Mexico which extended from Texas west to California. His troops were all Volunteers—the New Mexico settlers and frontiersmen and the hard-fighting Californians—except for a few Regular officers assigned to him. He got right down to business, for he had been major in the First Regular Dragoons and was a thorough soldier. To conquer the Indians he depended chiefly upon Kit Carson, colonel of the First New Mexican Cavalry, and his senior field officer.

The Apaches and the Navajos both had been bad, during the past year. The Mescalero or White Mountain Apaches of southern New Mexico itself needed attention first, for they had been cutting off travel along the Rio Grande River. Colonel Kit Carson was sent against them; his New Mexicans and Californians whipped them and stowed them all upon the new reservation of the Bosque Redondo or Round Grove, at Fort Sumner in eastern New Mexico, far from their White Mountains.

Then the lordly Navajos were ousted from their

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## THE BATTLE OF ADOBE WALLS (1864)

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canyons in northeastern present Arizona, where for one hundred and eighty years they had defied the white people. The Kit Carson column starved them out and routed them out and rounded them up, and herded them also upon the Bosque Redondo reservation.

By the summer of 1864 General Carleton announced that the Mescaleros and the Navajos had been turned into good Indians at last; henceforth they were to gather corn instead of scalps; now New Mexico might have peace as soon as the Comanches and Kiowas were taught a lesson.

The Comanches and Kiowas had to be punished. They were raiding the Santa Fe Trail over which the government wagon trains, the stages and the settlers traveled from the Missouri River through central and southern Kansas, up along the Arkansas River and thence southwest across the desert for Santa Fe of New Mexico, and the country all around.<sup>1</sup>

These raids were much objected to by General Carleton. His army supplies were being cut off, and so were the supplies for the citizens of his department. Traders and travelers were being killed. He acted promptly—had waited only until the Navajos were disposed of.

Colonel Kit Carson of course was the man to punish the Comanches and Kiowas. October 22, this 1864, General Carleton directed him to take four hundred and fifty men and strike the raiders in the northeast.

Of the four hundred and fifty, one hundred were to

<sup>1</sup> For an account of the old Santa Fe Trail, see "A Fracas on the Santa Fe Trail" in "Boys' Book of Frontier Fighters."

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be Indian scouts from the Utes and the Jicarilla or Basket Apaches. These Utes and Basket Apaches were friendly to the Americans; Kit Carson had been their Government agent; they called him Father Kit; just now they were being rationed at the enormous ranch of Lucien Maxwell, another old-time trapper and mountainman, in northern New Mexico.

The Utes and the Basket Apaches were mountain Indians; they hated the plains Indians—had long been at war with the Comanches, the Kiowas and the Cheyennes and Arapahos.

General Carleton at first had thought that the Navajos and the Mescalero Apaches of the Bosque Redondo would go, too. But they declined with thanks.

"You have put us here and told us to work on our farms and not fight any more," the smart Navajos said. "So why should we go upon the war path with your men?"

The Mescaleros agreed that this was sensible. As for the Utes and Basket Apaches—they were not at all keen, either. They said that they were willing to have their cousins the Mescalero Apaches join them, but they would have no Navajos along. The Apache nation and the Navajo nation were at war. And if they themselves went, they wished to be given sugar and coffee, the same as the white soldiers; they wished their families to be taken care of—to be given flour and meat every day; they wished blankets and shirts and rifles and ammunition, and Chief Ka-ni-at-ze said that he must have an extra horse or else he would not order his Ute warriors out.

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After a great deal of bargaining eighty-two of the Utes and the Basket Apaches promised to follow Father Kit against the Comanches and Kiowas. He took them with him down to new Fort Bascom, on the upper South Canadian River in eastern New Mexico near the Texas Panhandle and the Comanche country.

They arrived on November 10. The snow had been deep, the weather cold; seven of the Indians decided to go no farther, after all. They were sick and did not like to leave their families, they said. But at Fort Bascom Colonel Kit had the seventy-five others; he found his command waiting for him: fourteen officers and three hundred and twenty-one rank and file, of the First California Veteran Infantry, the First California Cavalry, the First New Mexican Cavalry, the First New Mexican Mounted Infantry, and a battery of two twelve-pounder mountain howitzers.

Major William McCleave of the Californians commanded the cavalry; Lieutenant-Colonel Francisco Abreü of the New Mexicans commanded the infantry; Lieutenant Charles Haberkorn of the New Mexicans commanded the seventy-five Indians; First Lieutenant George Henry Pettis of the Californians commanded the battery. Lieutenant J. C. Edgar of the New Mexican cavalry was assistant adjutant-general; Lieutenant Benjamin Taylor, Fifth United States Infantry, was assistant quartermaster and commissary; Assistant Surgeon George S. Courtright, United States Volunteers, was surgeon.

And Colonel Christopher Carson, New Mexican Vol-

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unteers, was the officer commanding all. General Carleton had supplied him with the men and the provisions; had told him to go ahead and show what he could do.

"You know where to find the Indians; you know what they have done; you know how to punish them. Everything is left with you. I believe you will have big luck," General Carleton had written him.

The allied Comanches and Kiowas were supposed to be encamped for the winter somewhere down the South Canadian River, in the northern part of the Texas Panhandle. This was a great winter resort for them and their friends. The snow did not lie long, to cover the grass; and there were wood and water and shelter and game, with the Santa Fe Trail easy to reach, on the north.

November 12 Colonel Carson led his little army into the northeast out of Fort Bascom, to strike the winter village of the allied Indians. He followed an old trader wagon road that crossed through the Panhandle as a short-cut to the Santa Fe Trail and the Arkansas River.

The march down the north side of the South Canadian was not rapid. It was no trappers' march, but the march of soldiers. The infantry trudged, so did the gunners, and the two twelve-pounder howitzers rolled on small wheels, behind tugging horses. Besides, there were twenty-seven wagons and an ambulance.

Moreover, Kit Carson knew Indians—he feared a surprise attack, he was very cautious, for the Co-

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manches and Kiowas were many and bold, and this was an uninhabited country.

Every night after camp was made, the Utes and Basket Apaches held a war dance. They kept the dance up until almost morning. The soldiers complained that nobody could sleep amidst all that howling and thumping; but the Indians did not care. They danced and grew strong celebrating the scalps that they were going to take.

Colonel Carson had planned to move his supply wagons as far as a place known to him as the Adobe Fort, about two hundred miles down the South Canadian from Fort Bascom. There he intended to leave the heavy wagons, and campaign with pack animals. The enemy, he felt certain, could not be far from the Adobe Fort.

The Adobe Fort was called by plainsmen Adobe Walls. It had been built in the winter of 1843-1844 as a trading post by the owners of the great Bents' Fort trading post in southeastern Colorado. The Bent brothers and company were old Indian traders. As the Kiowas and Comanches would not come to Bents' Fort and trade, Hook-Nose-Man, who was William Bent, sent one of his clerks, Wrinkled-Neck, down here, to erect a post and buy buffalo robes.

The Adobe Fort had been in ruins for a long time, but Kit Carson remembered it well. He had visited it when it was alive.

Wrinkled-Neck built one or two other trading posts on the South Canadian, here in Hutchinson County, northern Texas Panhandle. And there was the Adobe

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Walls of the buffalo hunters, in the same locality, built in 1873 and attacked in 1874 by Chief Quana Parker and his Antelope Comanches, as told in "Boys' Book of Frontier Fighters." Wrinkled-Neck's first Adobe Walls lay upriver a short distance.

Colonel Kit Carson was thirteen days in covering one hundred and seventy miles. Two of the days he had been held up by snow. This winter was very snowy. The Kiowas named it Muddy-traveling Winter.

In the afternoon of November 24 he camped at Mule Spring. Old Adobe Walls was only thirty miles east. Two Indian scouts had ridden in advance every day, to spy out enemy signs, but had found nothing. This evening, just at supper time, on a sudden every Ute and Basket Apache sprang to his feet, stared down the trail and jabbered excitedly.

The two scouts were coming back. The white men could scarcely see them, except as specks; but from a long way off the two had shouted, with a halloo—and the other Indians knew that there was news of the enemy.

Sure enough, the two scouts had discovered, ten miles east, the broad fresh trail of Indians driving cattle and loose horses. The trail pointed down the Canadian.

"We think Father Kit will have no trouble to find plenty Kiowa," they said.

Colonel Kit did not delay. He directed Lieutenant-Colonel Abreü to stay with the infantry and guard the wagons; then with the mounted men, and the artillery

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—two hundred and thirty-six rank and file, thirteen officers and the seventy-five scouts, he rode on to surprise the Comanche and Kiowa winter village, wherever that might be.

Had he known more, he might have hesitated. And had the Comanches and Kiowas known about him, they would have laughed. They numbered five thousand men and women, including three thousand warriors, in three villages stretching for ten miles along the South Canadian, both east and west of Adobe Walls. The first village, of one hundred and seventy lodges, was the Kiowa-Apache village; the next village, of three hundred and fifty lodges, was the main Kiowa village; the third village, as large or larger, was the Comanche village.

The head chief of the Kiowa-Apaches was Iron Shirt. The head chief of all the Kiowas was old Dohasan or Bluff, who had been head chief for thirty years and was of the clan of Real Dogs—the never-surrender clan.<sup>1</sup>

The head chief of the Comanches was One-Eyed Bear.

The villages were rich. They had plenty of food and buffalo robes; plenty of guns and ammunition bought from white traders. They did not fear the white soldiers—but they did not suspect that the white soldiers of a fighter such as Kit Carson were near at hand.

Colonel Kit Carson and his column traveled fifteen

<sup>1</sup> See "The Strong Medicine of Konate," in "Boys' Book of Indian Warriors."



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miles, and halted at midnight. Nobody was permitted to talk, nor to smoke; the officers and men stood holding their horses' bridles, waiting for daylight. The night was stinging cold, with a heavy frost.

In the gray dawn the column moved again, upon the Indian trail. The Ute and Basket Apache scouts rode with their knees doubled almost to their chins, and their buffalo robes stiffly jutting high above their heads, like split funnels.

They all had gone only a little way when from across the river a voice called, in Spanish:

“Ven acá! Ven acá! Come here! Come here!”

It was an Indian picket or herder, either calling to a companion or else daring them to cross.

The Utes and the Basket Apaches heard. They were quick to act. In a jiffy they had dived into the brush and were out again, stripped for battle and painted for war. It was a miraculous change. They gave their war whoop, and away they dashed, into the river, to strike the enemy.

Colonel Kit sent two companies of cavalry over, also, under Major McCleave. He himself started on with the rest of the column; then he heard shots, and saw three enemy pickets racing for down-river, with the Utes and the Basket Apaches and Major McCleave's soldiers in hot pursuit. So he ordered all his men except one company to push the charge on this side of the river, while he followed with the battery and escort.

The cavalry charged indeed; vanished in the cottonwoods and the tall grasses of the river bottoms. The

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battery hastened at best pace. Kit Carson valued that battery. Well for him that he had it.

Pretty soon there was sharp firing, on before; next, they passed cattle—stolen cattle; then they came upon the scouts.

The Utes and Basket Apaches had captured the enemy's pony herd! That, to them, was a great feat; so they had stopped to take horses. Each scout had from forty to fifty ponies and was changing to a fresh mount. He left his own horse as a sign, and away he dashed again, for more plunder.

Colonel Carson and his battery and escort toiled on. The going was hard, through grass as high as a horse's back; the cannon carriages were so small that the cannoneers could not all ride; every five minutes the march had to slacken, until the men on foot might catch up.

On ahead the firing had grown heavier, but it sounded farther and farther away each minute, as if the enemy was being driven. After a time the battery won out into a cleared space. A long low ridge crossed the shallow valley before. Beyond the ridge there were a number of dots that looked like Sibley Regular army tents.

"No," Kit Carson declared. "Those thar are Injun lodges, made of white buff'ler robes."

The battery and escort hastened; climbed the ridge and plunged over and down. The Indian village was abandoned. Major McCleave's cavalry had ridden through it; had surprised the enemy here and turned the women and children out into the brush, but the

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warriors were rallied a short distance below and were fighting.

Chief Iron Shirt had been killed at the door of his lodge. He had refused to run. Pushing-bear had stayed and killed one soldier and a Ute and had knocked another soldier from the saddle. Lean-bear was under a vow not to retreat until he had killed an enemy; so he likewise stayed and fought for a while. Mountain-bear, who was a small boy, seized his little brother by the hand and scuttled.

The fighting down the river, below the village, where the warriors were making a stand, was very strong. The soldiers and the scouts seemed hard pressed; all the space to Adobe Walls, four miles, was thronged with hurrying warriors. Colonel Carson urged his detachment forward; the Indians retreated, with the cavalry pursuing.

"If that fracas isn't over by the time we git thar, it soon will be," Colonel Kit asserted. "And then we'll burn these hyar lodges. Throw aside yore overcoats, boys. We'll git 'em ag'in on our way back."

He and the cavalry spurred ahead—and Colonel Carson had lost an overcoat! When he came back this way he certainly did not stop to pick it up.

The battery followed at a gallop, the cannoneers running behind. They all continued clear to Adobe Walls.

Adobe Walls sat in the midst of a level plain of grass. The Major McCleave men had tied their horses in the shelter of the walls and were deployed afoot, as skirmishers. The Utes and Basket Apaches were charg-

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ing about, on their ponies, shouting and shooting: two hundred Kiowas and Kiowa-Apaches and Comanches were doing the same, in front of them—hanging low upon the opposite sides of their horses and shooting from under their horses' necks.

And beyond the first line of warriors there were a thousand other braves, forming under their chiefs. Yes, and a mile or two farther east there was another large village, of more than three hundred lodges. Warriors were swarming out of it, to the field!

Colonel Kit saw that he had aroused a hornets' nest.

In came the battery; swept at full speed to the top of a little knoll, near Adobe Walls, where Colonel Kit and officers had grouped.

"Throw a few shells into that crowd over thar." That was the order.

"Battery, halt! Action right!"

The two howitzers were unlimbered and pointed to the right in a minute.

"Load with shell—load!"

"Ready!"

"Number One—fire!"

All the Kiowa and Comanche warriors had paused, to stare. The cannon were something new.

"Boom—bang!"

At the smoke puff every Indian had raised himself straight in his saddle. The shell burst above.

"Number Two—fire!"

"Boom—bang!"

With one tremendous yell the Indians wheeled their horses and away they scoured, more frightened than

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hurt. Before the battery could deliver another round there was not an enemy within range.

"That settles them Injuns, boys," Colonel Carson remarked, well pleased. "We'll unsaddle and unharness, water the hosses and let 'em feed, and take a bite ourselves. Then we'll clean out them villages below."

The camp made merry over the easy victory. Surgeon Courtright had fitted up a hospital in a corner of Adobe Walls and was attending to the few wounded. The other men breakfasted on hardtack and raw bacon; told stories of what they had done and what they expected to do. In the midst of the talking and laughing Colonel Kit Carson uttered an exclamation.

He was gazing down the valley, through his spy glass. From the next village at least a thousand Indians were advancing, horseback, in a dense mass fringed with lances and shields and gun barrels and tossing plumes.

"Saddle up! Git those cannon ready!" he ordered quickly. "We're in for another fight. The hull valley's full o' Injuns and villages."

The command hustled. The Indians came on rapidly; they deployed and rode to all sides. Very soon the Kit Carson column was surrounded and fighting for life.

Some of the Indians dismounted and crept through the tall grass. The other raced back and forth, firing and yelling. The howitzer shells passed over them and between them, and did little harm; the cavalry carbines

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barked lustily; the Utes and Basket Apaches capered and shrieked.

One shell luckily landed. It struck a horse, tore a large hole and sent the rider flying twenty feet through the air. In an instant two other Comanches had charged for him—had reached down and grabbed him, each by an arm, and had galloped away with him, in spite of the rifle balls. It was a brave act; and the same thing was done again and again.

With the enemy there was a bugler. He had stationed himself at the rear, down river. Whenever the cavalry bugles sounded "Advance," the Indian bugler sounded "Retreat." Whenever the cavalry bugles sounded retreat, the Indian bugler blew advance. But when the cavalry bugle sounded halt, he blew the halt, also.

That was odd. Colonel Kit was certain that the Indians' bugler was a white man. The Indians afterward said that he was Chief White-bear, whose Kiowa name was Set-tainte and whom the white men called Satanta. White-bear had captured a French brass horn from soldiers and had learned how to blow it. He even blew it for meals, when at home. He was a great man.

The fighting waxed hotter. The Kiowas and Comanches seemed determined; they had no end of ammunition, they saw that the soldiers numbered only two hundred and fifty, they counted the Utes and Basket Apaches as little, and if the guns—that-shoot-twice would quit, then with one charge all would be over.

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As the sun rose higher, and passed the noon mark, Colonel Kit saw that he was in a tight place. The enemy was increasing; parties of five, ten, twenty, even fifty, were constantly hastening in. By the middle of the afternoon there were fully three thousand warriors in the field. The Kiowas say that if many young men had not been out upon a raid, they would have had more fighters.

It began to look as though the Indians were bent upon keeping the white soldiers here until night; had planned to move the village goods and stow the women and children in safety, and in the morning wipe the invaders out.

Already they were entering the first village, again, and taking away horses and household things. The Utes and Basket Apaches did not like this—they saw their plunder disappearing.

Colonel Carson remembered that above the village he had left his wagons and only seventy-five infantry to guard them. If the Comanches and Kiowas discovered those—whew! In fact, it was time that he did something more. He could not stay here, on the defensive.

The majority of his officers voted to push on, down river, and capture the next village. Most of his men were eager for the fight, and enjoying themselves. But Kit Carson knew that he was having the biggest Indian "scrimmage" ever yet staged, and considerably more than he had bargained for. These Comanches and Kiowas were strong in guns and numbers and courage. They were battling for their homes and winter sup-

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plies; showed no fear, except of the howitzers; and when the howitzers' ammunition failed, then the whole command would be bunched up and ringed closer and closer with bullet, arrow and fire.

He ordered a retirement, on the back trail, to destroy the first village and open the way to the wagon train. By destroying that village he hoped to draw the attention of the Indians from the train.

The tied cavalry horses were led out from Adobe Walls in sets of fours. One mounted man led three horses; the other men, on foot, were to fight. The two howitzers were dragged at the rear of the column.

The Indians saw and attacked more fiercely than ever. Colonel Kit thought several times that his rear was to be crumpled up. The carbines had no rest, as the Indians charged by horse and foot through the grass.

Aha! They had fired the grass, behind. The flames and smoke surged on furiously—"caused my rear to close up at double quick," Colonel Kit reported. All the blinded column was enveloped in the crackling blaze that raced it on either side. Colonel Kit fired the grass in front, to clear the road.

Soon he had to make for a little piece of high ground on his right, where the grass was shorter. The Indians surrounded him. They charged in, under cover of the smoke; shot and wheeled and scurried away.

There was a Mexican boy in the ranks. He had been among the skirmishers this morning, at Adobe Walls. While crawling through the weeds he had put



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his hand upon a rattlesnake. The snake had bitten him, but Surgeon Courtright had burned the wound, and the boy did not suffer. Now in the skirmishing he and a Comanche crept toward each other—a gust of wind blew the smoke away and there they were, face to face. The Comanche shot first, and missed; the Mexican boy shot and killed. He sprang to take the scalp—the dead warrior's friends tried to keep it, the Mexican boy's comrades helped him, and he took the scalp. It was the only scalp of the battle, and it paid him for the snake bite.

The two howitzers were in action.

“By hand, to the front!” Number One was hauled from behind the rise, to the top; was aimed—“Ready!”—gunner Number Four thrust the friction primer into the vent, while he lay flat; “Fire!”—and the lanyard was jerked by another gunner lying flat.

“Boom!” The howitzer recoiled down to the foot of the rise, out of sight; but Number Two gun was being advanced. Thus they kept it up, while the carbines rattled and the Utes and Basket Apaches scampered, and the Comanches and Kiowas charged.

When the fire had burned off, Colonel Kit moved on. There was hard fighting, right into the village. The howitzers had to drive the enemy out. Then half of the soldiers were set at work destroying the lodges; the other half supported the howitzers.

The village, of fine white lodges, yielded hundreds of beautifully dressed buffalo robes; dried meat and berries, powder, lead and lodge furnishings; contained a buggy and a spring wagon and harness, owned by

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old Dohasan; white woman's clothing of bonnets and shoes and so forth, and a United States cavalry sergeant's equipment.

After every soldier had selected several good robes, and the Utes and Basket Apaches had taken plunder, the lodges and all were set afire. Two old Ute squaws found four blind and crippled Kiowas in the lodges and killed them with axes.

Now it was dark. The Comanches and Kiowas were pressing around, whooping and threatening. Colonel Kit felt more uneasy than ever. This burned village was no place for him. His ammunition was almost gone; he had ten wounded soldiers and five wounded scouts, besides many wounded horses; his men were tired out with the long day. They had been marching and fighting for twenty-four hours on one scant meal of bacon and biscuit.

So the badly wounded were loaded upon the artillery caissons and carriages; the column headed up the valley, expecting to be attacked again at any moment. After three hours it arrived at the camp of the wagon train and the infantry—and was glad indeed to be there.

Even the Utes and the Basket Apaches were worn out. Tonight they gave no war dance. They slept. So did the white soldiers, with guards posted. In the morning the scouts wished to go home.

"Let us take the Bascom trail, Father Kit," they said. "If we stay we shall all be burned like the grass. We shall have to fight the whole Kiowa and Comanche nation. That is the truth."

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The enemy was gathering again, just out of range of the howitzers; might close the trail in both directions; no doubt from miles away still other Indians were hastening in. Therefore Father Kit took his scouts' advice; he vetoed the proposal from his officers to capture another village, and after he had rested his horses he marched westward, on cautious trail. He sent a dispatch to General Carleton:

"If I am expected to return into the valley of the Canadian I must request reinforcements of fresh animals, seven hundred mounted men, two six-pounder and two twelve-pounder guns, and supplies for four months. Not less than a column of one thousand men, thus outfitted, is necessary in order to bring these Indians to terms."

On December 20 he arrived at Fort Bascom. The Utes and the Basket Apaches had danced every night of the three weeks, to celebrate the taking of the one scalp, which they had bought from the Mexican boy.

The Kit Carson loss was two soldiers killed and ten wounded; one scout killed and five wounded; and many horses disabled. The Comanche and Kiowa loss was thought to be over sixty, but that was never known.

"The Kiowas and the Comanches whipped Father Kit," said Buckskin Charley, one of the Ute scouts. "Only Adobe Walls saved our scalps. We had to fight fire to keep from being burned up. Ugh!"

"If it had not been for the big guns that shot twice, not a single white man would have got out of the Canadian Valley," said the Comanches and Kiowas.

And Colonel Kit "rather guessed" that this was so.

## CHAPTER XIII

### ON THE TRAIL OF THE DOG SOLDIERS (1868)

#### THE "SANDY" FORSYTH SCOUTS

**W**HILE the Indians in the Southwest were troubling the white men during the Civil War, the Indians of the great western plains had not been idle. The Cheyennes, the Arapahos and the Sioux forayed through Kansas, Nebraska and eastern Colorado; the Sioux carried terror into even Minnesota.

After the close of the War of the Rebellion the United States sent a peace commission into the plains, to talk with the Indians. The Indians were told that now the white armies were done fighting one another; unless the red soldiers made peace also, the thousands of blue-coat soldiers would be turned loose upon them.

There were many councils, with the Sioux and the Northern Cheyennes and the Crows, in the north; with the Southern Cheyennes, the Arapahos, the Comanches, the Kiowas and the Apaches in the south.

The plains Indians had been objecting to the white travel through their buffalo grounds. The Overland Stage road and the emigrants were frightening the game by their Platte River trail through Nebraska; the Butterfield Overland Dispatch stages (not the same stages that had pioneered in Arizona before the war)

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and the emigrants were doing the same in Kansas, on their way between the Missouri River and Denver; and along the Arkansas River, farther south, the old Santa Fe Trail was thronged with wagons bound for New Mexico.

Forts had been built by the United States, to guard the roads. The Indians did not wish soldiers in their country.

Satanta the Kiowa said:

"A long time ago this land belonged to our fathers, but when I go up the river I see a camp of soldiers, and they are cutting my wood down and killing my buffalo. I don't like that, and when I see it my heart feels like bursting with sorrow."

Other chiefs spoke in similar words. But by new treaties they were satisfied. The Southern Cheyennes, the Arapahos, Kiowas, Comanches and Apaches were given all of the Indian Territory, or that which today is Oklahoma. They were pledged to live south of the Arkansas River and the white man's trails; they might hunt, but they must keep away from the traveled roads and the settlements; they would be given food and clothing and powder and lead, on their reserve, and would not be bothered, as long as they were good.

The Sioux and the Northern Cheyennes were granted that which is today the west half of South Dakota. They likewise were to keep away from the white man's roads and settlements.

The wagon roads and military posts were not the only matters that had alarmed the Indians. The white man's thunder wagons were following the horse



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wagons. The Union Pacific Railroad had started to cross the buffalo range in Nebraska and present southern Wyoming; and a second iron road, the Kansas Pacific, was creeping through northern central Kansas on its way to Denver of Colorado.

The Sioux themselves had won a great victory. A white man's wagon road had been opened, which from Fort Laramie of the Oregon Trail in southern Wyoming should cross northern Wyoming and pass on into Montana. It was a gold seekers' road. The Sioux would not have it. All northern Wyoming had been given them, they said, for their hunting ground, so that they would not need to hunt in the south near the emigrant road.

Under Chief Red Cloud they stopped travel on the new road; they besieged the new forts; and finally the Government ordered the forts to be abandoned and the road closed.<sup>1</sup>

When the Southern Cheyennes and the Arapahos learned what had been granted to the Sioux and the Northern Cheyennes, they decided that if they made a strong fight, then they would be given their own prized hunting grounds of Kansas.

The summer and the fall of 1867; and all the winter had been very quiet in Kansas. The Kansas Pacific trains and workmen, and the stage stations and the ranches were little annoyed. And when the spring of 1868 passed without fighting, there were hopes of continued peace, for at the greening of the grass the young

<sup>1</sup> See "Red Cloud Stands in the Way," in "Boys' Book of Indian Warriors."



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braves always grew restless. The spring was the danger time.

Early this spring the troops were withdrawn from the Wyoming Powder River country of the Sioux. The Indians had only been waiting. The Sioux sent runners down, into the south, to tell the news.

"The white men are afraid," they said. "Now you see. We stood in the way and they yielded. The road is closed. You have a road through your country. If you stand firmly, it will be closed."

The Arapahos and the Southern Cheyennes listened.

In August two hundred Cheyennes, twenty Arapahos and four Sioux made up a war party. They put on their war paint and left their hunting camp in southern Kansas. They said that they were going against the Pawnees, in the north. Instead of going against the Pawnees they stopped and attacked the ranches of north central Kansas, beyond the railroad line.

This was war. It was the beginning of the dreadful plains war of 1868 and 1869, which turned western Kansas and eastern Colorado red.

Major-General Phil Sheridan was in command of all this region, as chief of the Military Department of the Missouri. He had under him twelve hundred cavalry and fourteen hundred infantry, to guard Kansas, Missouri, Colorado, New Mexico and Indian Territory. But when his troops had been scattered, for garrison duties in the posts, and for escorting the trains and the stage coaches, there were only about eight hundred left, for chasing raiders.

The Southern Cheyennes were the most to be feared.

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The Cheyennes have been a great nation. Their men and women are splendidly built, and handsome, and of lighter skin than the Sioux and the Arapahos. They are smart, their lodges are clean, in the old days their horses were the best. As fighters they have ranked very high; they waged terrible war—their losses in battles with the white men have been larger, when numbers are counted, than the losses of the Sioux, the Kiowa or the Comanches.

Formerly all the Cheyennes lived together in the north, on the Upper Missouri River and in the Dakotas. They are Algonquians, like the Shawnees, the Sacs, the Blackfeet, the Comanches, and so many others. Their name comes from the Sioux name Shai-ena—Strange Speech People; for when they entered the Sioux country nobody there could understand them.

The Sioux drove them west and south. When Bents' Fort was ready for trade, in southeastern Colorado, part of the Cheyennes moved down, to be near it. They became the Southern Cheyennes. The others stayed in the north. They became the Northern Cheyennes.

The Cheyennes and the Arapahos were close friends. The Sioux and the Kiowas made peace with them. So after a time the Cheyennes and the Sioux and the Arapahos, the Kiowas and the Comanches had joined against the whites.

The range of the Southern Cheyennes extended on both sides of the Arkansas River of southern Kansas. They raided in New Mexico and Texas with the Comanches and Kiowas; they raided to the Platte

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River of Nebraska with the Arapahos and the Sioux. But the hunting grounds between the Arkansas River and the Platte River were their especial field.

At this time, in the summer of 1868, the head chief of the Southern Cheyennes was Black Kettle. He had been head chief for many years. Among the other chiefs there were Tall Bull and Roman Nose. They were not tribal chiefs, but chiefs of Cheyenne clans or secret societies.

The Cheyennes were divided into warrior clans. These were the clans of the Dog Men, Fox Men, Strong Heart or Flint Men, Medicine Lance Men, Red Shield or Buffalo Bull Men, and Bowstring Men.

Tall Bull was chief of the Dog Men or Dog Soldiers, who were supposed by the whites to be the fighting clan, because their members seemed to be as brave as the no-surrender Real Dogs of the Kiowas. The Dog Men were the largest in number, and the most independent; they camped by themselves, they leagued with the Sioux and the Araphos, so that Dog Soldiers came to mean, upon the plains, professional red fighters.

It was Tall Bull's Dog Soldiers that led in the war of 1868.

Roman Nose (whose name was Sauts, or Bat) was chief of the Medicine Lance Men. No finer looking Cheyenne ever rode the plains: a strapping, stately Indian, six feet three, broad chested, clean limbed, with well-shaped head, flashing black eyes, straight thin-lipped mouth, large beaked nose and flaring nostrils, and a stride like a monarch's. The Cheyennes were a

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proud people; Roman Nose as proud as the proudest.

In a peace talk at old Fort Ellsworth of Kansas in 1866 he had said:

“This is the first time that I have ever shaken the white man’s hand in friendship. If the railroad is not stopped I shall be his enemy forever.”

To the peace commission last year Black Kettle had said:

“We were once friends with the whites, but you nudged us out of the way by your scheming. Now when we are in council you keep nudging each other. Why don’t you talk, and go straight?”

Roman Nose himself had not come in to this council. Almost all the Southern Cheyennes had stayed away; they were not to be hurried into giving up their hunting grounds. But Black Kettle and other chiefs had at last signed a treaty.

When General Sheridan heard that the Cheyenne Dog Soldiers were out raiding he started from Fort Leavenworth on the Missouri River of northeastern Kansas to take command of his troops in person. He traveled on the Kansas Pacific Railroad to Fort Harker, first.

On today’s map of Kansas the Kansas Pacific is the division of the Union Pacific which crosses northern central Kansas. It had been commenced at Wyandotte, on the east bank of the Missouri River opposite Kansas City. It followed up along the north bank of the Kansas or Kaw River, to Junction City. Here the Republican River from the north and the Solomon River from the northwest join to form the Kansas.

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The iron trail followed the Solomon for a short distance; then struck westward up the north side of the Smoky Hill Fork of the Solomon, for Denver of Colorado.

That was also the route of the B. O. D. stage road and the emigrant road across the Kansas buffalo plains claimed by the Cheyennes and the Arapahos.

In the summer of 1868 the Kansas Pacific had run trains to Sheridan Station, four hundred and five miles from the Missouri River, and had graded to Fort Wallace, ten miles beyond—or fifteen miles by stage. The trail from Junction City had been bloody; the plains Indians were fighting the surveyors and the graders and the train crews and the station hands; it had proved to be a tough job, to build the Kansas Pacific through the Cheyenne and Arapaho country.

There were four army posts on the road: Fort Riley, near Junction City, at Mile Post 140, Fort Harker (which had been Fort Ellsworth) at Mile Post 230, Fort Hays at Mile Post 290, and Fort Wallace at Mile Post 412 or thereabouts.

Fort Riley was well constructed, of stone; and it is still an army headquarters. Fort Harker was smaller and meaner, constructed of boards and logs; it has disappeared. Fort Hays was no better, upon the treeless buffalo plains about a mile from Hays City. Much of Hays City had moved on, to end of track at Sheridan. Little Fort Wallace, out beyond everything except the stage stations, was the most desolate of all.

So General "Little Phil" hastened by branch line and main line from Fort Leavenworth to Fort Harker;

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then when the news of the raiding grew he went on to Fort Hays.

Matters looked bad indeed. Wagon trains and stages and ranches were being attacked with bullet, arrow and fire; forty and more persons, men and women, had been killed; other women had been carried from their ruined homes into dreadful captivity. The raids covered all western Kansas and southeastern Colorado. The Arapahos and the Sioux were helping the Cheyennes. Sheridan Station, at end of track, had been threatened with a siege—two hundred miles of railroad travel on the Kansas Pacific was being halted, the stages feared to run to Denver, and to New Mexico by the southern trail—Colorado appealed for soldiers at once. General Sheridan proclaimed war. He divided his field force into columns and sent them out.

Upon his staff of officers there was Brevet Colonel George Alexander Forsyth, aged thirty-one, and major of the Ninth Cavalry. "Sandy" Forsyth, the army called him. He deserved the name. Nothing ever downed him; he had the "sand."

He had entered the army for the Civil War as a private in the Chicago Dragoons; he had come out in 1865 with the brevet of brigadier general of Volunteers and the double brevet of lieutenant-colonel and colonel of Regulars, as reward for distinguished bravery; had been one of the two staff officers with General Sheridan upon the famous "Sheridan's Ride," October 19, 1864, from Winchester to Cedar Creek, Virginia, which turned defeat into a Union victory.

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Now when at Fort Hays General Sheridan started his columns out to strike the Indians, that left Colonel "Sandy" Forsyth with no fighting. This did not please him at all. He wished action. He asked to be detailed for field service, but the columns were supplied with officers of his rank. So General Sheridan told him that he might enlist a scout company, and reconnoiter to the north; might try to find the Indians who had been raiding the ranches there.

The plan just suited Colonel Forsyth. General Sheridan assigned First Lieutenant Frederick H. Beecher of the Third Infantry as his assistant. That suited, also Lieutenant Beecher (who happened to be the nephew of the great Henry Ward Beecher, New York preacher and orator) was a slight, quiet young man, but he had a record. He had entered the Civil War as sergeant of Maine Volunteers, had acted the hero at Gettysburg, had been wounded in the leg and lamed for life; and had come back to the army with a limp.

Doctor John H. Mooers of Hays City was accepted as surgeon. He was a middle-aged man, from Plattsburg, New York; had served as surgeon of New York Volunteers in the Civil War, and now had located upon the frontier, to practice his profession and to hunt.

All the enlisted men were civilians: ex-soldiers of the Blue or the Gray, or else for the main part skilled frontiersmen. As soon as Colonel Forsyth announced at Fort Hays that he was forming a company to trail the Indians down, volunteers offered themselves by scores, up and down the line.

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He chose as his first sergeant William H. H. McCall, another Civil War veteran. Sergeant McCall had risen from sergeant to lieutenant-colonel of Pennsylvania Volunteers; had been brevetted brigadier general for gallantry on the field; and after having been mustered out in 1865 he had moved into the Far West, as so many ex-soldiers did.

The other men were of the right kind, too: Abner Sharp Grover, called "Sharp" Grover, who would act as guide and was reckoned to be the best Government scout on the plains; Dick Parr, "Pet" Trudeau and natty, smooth-cheeked Jack Stillwell, aged nineteen, likewise daring Government scouts; Plainsmen Donovan, Clark, William Wilson, J. A. Pliley, Chauncey B. Whitney, Lou McLaughlin, George W. Culver, Frank Herrington, Howard Morton; Martin Burke the Irishman who had served in the British army in India; old Louis Farley and his son Hudson, aged eighteen, who were considered extra fine shots; trappers, buffalo hunters, clerks, surveyors, railroad hands, graders, settlers, including college graduates who had made good here on the plains.

Fifty were enlisted at Fort Hays, Hays City and Fort Harker. The last upon the roll was a Jew boy, named Sigmund Schlesinger. He was eighteen and under-sized and insignificant and of no reputation as a fighter; had been in America only four years. Colonel Forsyth was in a hurry; finally accepted him in order to fill out. The company did not think much of this latest recruit, but he might prove handy around camp.



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Each man was to be paid one dollar a day; he furnished his own horse—was allowed thirty cents a day for that. He was equipped with canteen, blankets, knife, tin cup, Colt's revolver, and repeating Henry or Spencer carbines. The Henry rifle was like the modern Winchester; the Spencer carried six cartridges in the stock and one in the chamber. They both were good guns.

Each man had one hundred and forty rounds of carbine ammunition and thirty rounds of revolver ammunition; there were seven days' rations of bread, salt pork and dried meat, coffee and salt; but no tents or wagons. Four pack mules bore the extra ammunition, the medical supplies, and part of the rations. Colonel Forsyth was resolved to travel light and catch the Indians.

It took only five days to fill the company. He led out from Fort Hays on August 29; scouted to the north, where the Cheyennes had been killing and plundering; and swung in to Fort Wallace—the last of the posts. He had not sighted an enemy. Then at Fort Wallace he heard that a band of the hostiles had stolen horses from the stage company station only a few miles away.

This made "Sandy" Forsyth hot. He telegraphed General Sheridan, saying that he wished to go out again instead of returning to Fort Hays. General Sheridan replied: "Go ahead."

The hardy Forsyth Scouts started afresh; left Fort Wallace on September 10. Two of the men were ill and had to remain behind. Now the company

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numbered forty-eight men and three officers. In a day or two they struck an Indian trail heading for the northwest. They followed it; it split into several trails—an Indian trick. Keeping to one of the trails the Forsyth Rough Riders steadily pursued farther and farther out, clear to the Republican River beyond the northern border of Kansas.

The land was flat and bare, except for the lone buttes or sharp hills that now and then broke the surface, and except for the trees of the stream banks, and the short curly buffalo grass browned by the September sun.

Suddenly, September 14, they came upon a large trail, recently made, pointing up the south bank of the Republican. The next day two other trails joined it. It was so broad and so trampled with pony hoofs and cattle hoofs, that evidently all the Indians whom they were seeking had traveled it.

“We’re following the whole Cheyenne nation,” said Sharp Grover. “I calculate that four thousand reds have passed here; that likely means fifteen hundred warriors.”

“We’ll keep after, boys,” Colonel “Sandy” declared. “Sheridan sent us out to find Indians.”

The North Republican River forks in southwestern Nebraska. One fork is the Arikaree. The Arikaree wends out of northeastern Colorado, and meets the other fork in Nebraska, to help form the main Republican. The broad Indian trail proceeded on, up along the shallow, rippling Arikaree. The fifty-one white men pressed after the four thousand red men and

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women. On course southwest they crossed into north-eastern Colorado.

The Cheyennes seemed to have been in a hurry. The trail began to be littered with lodge poles, moccasins, antelope and buffalo meat. The scouts were short on rations and game had been scarce. The Indians had scattered the buffalo herds. But the scouts did not dare to eat the Indian meat, for fear that it was poisoned. They rode on, nevertheless, hoping for a fight. Every man, said one of them, had a fighting back as stiff as a cat's!

In the afternoon of September 16 they entered a narrow ravine or little gorge, of the Arikaree. At the other end the river came down in a curve through a grassy valley some two miles wide and two miles long. About the middle the river broadened in a bed one hundred and forty yards wide, divided by a little island. Most of the bed was dry and sandy; a current of shallow water, a few feet wide and eight or ten inches deep, washed the island on either side. The banks of the river bed had been cut by the spring floods, and were grown to grasses, willows and wild plums.

The valley itself was beautiful, covered with long grass. On the northeast there was a range of bare bluffs, through the north point of which the river passed. The land extended flatly to the base of the bluffs, three quarters of a mile from the island. In the other direction, or toward the west, the land rose in a long slope.

Everything looked peaceful in the late afternoon sun.

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Colonel Forsyth made camp on the slope side, opposite the little island.

The mules were unpacked and the horses unsaddled, so that they might graze at the limits of their picket ropes. The orders were strict: Every animal was to be staked close in, and strongly staked. Colonel Forsyth suspected that his march had been watched. He wished to take no chances of a stampede.

After sentries had been posted and supper had been eaten, the camp went to sleep, rolled in blankets, here beside the quiet Arikaree, under the stars. It was a silent country, a red man's country still; few white persons, save old trappers and daring buffalo hunters, ever had been into it. No white trails penetrated it. Cavalry scouting between the Platte River and the Kansas River had passed it by.

The Cheyennes were not far. They had been spying upon the column for five days. Now they had turned—had Colonel Forsyth marched on until evening they would have ambushed him at the upper end of this very valley. They were going to attack any-way.

Roman Nose was their war chief. The foolish fifty, cut off by one hundred and ten miles from Fort Wallace and rescue, were to be crushed by seven hundred warriors—Cheyennes, Sioux and Arapahos.

Colonel Forsyth felt anxious. He sensed danger in the air. This evening Indian fire signals flashed through the dusk, from the bordering hills. Tonight he was up and around, every hour, inspecting the sentries and the horses.

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When the darkness had thinned a little, and the sky was faintly pink over the crest of the eastern bluffs, he was standing beside the farthest sentry in the rear of camp. Gazing keenly, he chanced to see an alarming sight: the feathered head of an Indian cautiously rising above the brush of a shallow, brushy draw, near by.

Colonel "Sandy" shot instantly; he and the sentry shouted: "Indians! Indians!" But the carbine report and the shouts were drowned by a tremendous outburst of noise. A party of the enemy, yelling, shaking rattles and dry hides, had dashed to stampede the horses.

The scouts had been almost as quick. They were Indian wise—they had dived for the picket ropes. Only two pack mules and five horses broke away; those horses had been hobbled, in disobedience of orders. The Indians drove the seven before them, up the valley, pursued by bullets.

"Saddle up, men! Saddle up, quick! This isn't the end."

Colonel Forsyth and Lieutenant Beecher worked; Sergeant McCall and Sharp Grover worked; the other men worked. In a few minutes they were ready and waiting. The dawn brightened. The colonel and Scout Grover were together, peering and listening. Suddenly Sharp's hand clutched Colonel "Sandy's" shoulder.

"Good Heavens, general, look at the Injuns!"

## CHAPTER XIV

### DIGGING IN ON BEECHER'S ISLAND (1868)

#### ROMAN NOSE LEADS THE WARRIORS

**T**HEY had come—the Dog Soldiers and their allies! As if sprung from the very ground, they were charging in, down the valley slope at the rear of the camp, in across the level on the east, up the river between, all in the dusky pink of the morning. They yelled and cavorted, their war bonnets streamed, their lance tufts tossed above their painted shields, they shook guns and bows, the earth trembled to the drum of the ponies' hoofs.

Only the back trail, down river, to the north, was open. It would lead through the narrow end of the valley, and Colonel Forsyth was too wise a soldier to take it. The enemy would have asked nothing better; they hoped to force him and his fifty upon it and pocket them in the gorge.

"Steady! Hold them off, men! Deploy your skirmishers, Beecher!" he shouted. He had been thinking rapidly. He remembered the Fetterman affair, of 1866, when just outside of Fort Phil Kearney in northern Wyoming Captain William J. Fetterman, Captain Fred H. Brown and seventy-nine men had been surrounded and killed by Chief Red Cloud's Sioux; had been ridden down in one last great charge.

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The Captain Fetterman detachment had been caught in the open. This was a similar case, for in all the valley there was no refuge except—

“How about that island, Grover?” he asked quickly, while the men shot fast and the warriors began to gallop in a circle.

“It’s all we can do,” said Scout Grover.

“On foot, to the island, boys! Don’t delay. Lead your horses. Tie them to the bushes and we’ll fight from there.”

So in good order, covered by the skirmishers, they fell back across the first channel, to the little island. It was sixty yards long and only twenty yards wide; the up-stream half was the higher, of gravel and sand and willow brush. The down-stream half was low and almost bare, with one cottonwood tree as a sentinel.

Scout Jack Stillwell and two other crack shots ran across the lower end and hid in a sand wash of the east bank—a natural rifle pit—to keep the enemy away from there. The rest tied the horses to the willow bushes, in a circle, and made ready to fight from inside the circle. They had managed to bring one mule with the extra ammunition, but they had left the medicine packs and all the camp stuff.

“Lie flat, boys. Now, fire slowly, aim well, keep yourselves covered, and above all, don’t waste a single cartridge,” Colonel “Sandy” directed.

Here they were, fifty-one surrounded by nobody knew how many warriors. As the morning grew brighter, Scout Grover estimated that there were one thousand. Colonel “Sandy” thought that there were

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not more than four or five hundred. They moved so quickly that it was hard to tell. But the truth is that there were at least seven hundred.

The island was a piece of luck for the scouts. The enemy could not sneak upon it; the sandy strip on both sides was open to the deadly fire of the repeating carbines.

Chief Roman Nose, the Cheyennes afterward said, was angry that his men had not seized the island themselves. He sent two hundred of his best shots to crawl through the grass and weeds to the brush of the banks; lying there they poured bullets and arrows into the white fort.

That was a terrible fire. Scout William Wilson was killed, first, but the sharpshooters aimed principally at the horses. The scouts used the ammunition boxes and the horse bodies as breastworks; the bullets and arrows came in over.

A great many Indian women and children had gathered upon the bluffs to the east; they shrieked and waved and urged the death of the white men.

Brave Colonel Forsyth walked among his scouts, leading his horse and talking to them. They begged him to lie down, like the rest, but he would not.

"Fire slowly. Choose your marks. Don't throw away a single bullet. That's right—dig when you can, but keep down," he said. "Part of you dig pits, large enough for one or two, while the others shoot."

Old Doctor Mooers was using his carbine. Lieutenant Beecher, Sergeant McCall and Chief Scout Sharp Grover seconded their colonel with cautioning



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words. The men dug, while they lay flat; wielded knives and tin cups and fingers and toes, scooping out little hollows in the sand.

The sun rose in the clear sky, flooding the island with light and showing the Indian women and children upon the bluffs, and the puffs of smoke from the red skirmishers, and the hissing arrows twinkling in, and the bonneted horsemen of Chief Roman Nose riding around and around, yelling triumphantly.

Colonel "Sandy" uttered an exclamation, and sank. A bullet had entered his right thigh and glanced upward, making a painful wound. But he staggered to his feet again; hobbled about, directing and encouraging. Now he paused, and stooped to speak to a man who seemed to be getting nervous. A second bullet struck him—tore into the calf of his left leg, and through the large bone, and out. The bone was broken sheer in two. So he crawled with his elbows and lay beside Scout Grover.

The Indians were blowing an artillery bugle in the distance. From the bank somebody shouted, in good English:

"There goes the last horse down!"

This was true. Every animal had been killed. The fifty-one white men had been put afoot.

Doctor Mooers' pit was large enough for two men. He had Colonel "Sandy" dragged to him, but could do nothing for him, yet.

Nine o'clock had arrived. The sun burned, the air was blue with powder smoke. The circling warriors had disappeared. Roman Nose had withdrawn them

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up the river, around a bend that concealed them from the island. They were five hundred. The chief medicine man told them that the white men's bullets should not harm them—should melt before reaching them; his medicine was strong today. They listened, but they believed more in Roman Nose, who promised to lead them into the island and trample the white scouts under the ponies' hoofs.

The word was borne to the skirmishers. The firing from the banks on both sides of the island increased. Two hundred guns and bows deluged the rifle pits with bullet and arrow, preparing the way for the charge. That was good tactics.

Colonel "Sandy" and Sharp Grover and Lieutenant Beecher knew what was to occur. Orders were passed for the men not to reply to the firing, but to keep every carbine and revolver loaded, and wait. The colonel propped himself with his shoulders against the end of his pit, the better to see. A bullet ripped across his forehead; must have fractured his skull; gave him a blinding headache, but he could not attend to that.

Doctor Mooers was shot through the temples. He acted unable to see, or speak, but he was alive. Lou McLaughlin had a ball in his chest. He fought on. The island was a hot place.

Look! Here came the charge—first at a canter around the bend up stream, to the southwest. Eight ranks of horsemen, sixty warriors front, extending clear across the stream bed and upon the level ground on right and left!

The riders were stripped and painted and feathered,

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their ponies were painted and decorated with streamers, they brandished bow and lance and gun and shield. And well before them all, there rode Roman Nose.

He sat, bronze and magnificent, upon a splendid chestnut horse. Upon his head there was a great war bonnet, with two buffalo horns for its crest and an eagle-feather tail floating far behind. About his waist he wore a crimson officer's sash presented to him in the peace council at Fort Ellsworth. In one hand he carried a Spencer repeating carbine.

At the left of the front line there rode the chief medicine man, painted hideously, and chanting.

The women and children upon the bluffs were shrieking and singing louder than ever; medicine drums were being beaten; the bugle was pealing; and the fire from the banks doubled.

But the scouts upon the island waited, as they had been ordered to. Colonel Forsyth, tortured with his head and his legs, gazed cool and tense. Sharp Grover and the other men chewed hard, moistening their dry lips, clutching their guns and peering over the sand mounds and between the horse bodies.

At a ringing whoop from Roman Nose and a flourish of his carbine the red cavalry broke into a gallop. The eight ranks charged, fast and faster, filling the river bed where it widened in the approach to the island. The sand flew, the thud of hoofs and the yells of the riders drowned the singing, in a few moments the first rank was near—the firing from the banks ceased, to let the charge through—Roman Nose, lead-

ing at full speed, was only fifty yards away, with his warriors pressing after—

“Now!” shouted Colonel “Sandy,” bracing himself to level his own carbine. His scouts surged to their knees.

“Crash!”

The carbine levers clicked, jamming fresh cartridges into the chambers. Again:

“Cr-r-rash!”

The front rank of ponies and warriors had been torn to fragments, but the other ranks were coming on.

“Cr-r-rash!”

The scouts were working levers and pulling triggers as rapidly as they could. A fourth time—

“Cr-r-rash!”

The red horde broke like a wave dashing against a reef.

Horses were swerving and running wild, some riderless, some bearing wounded warriors; horses were prone and kicking, warriors were lying dead, the river bed was in a turmoil. Down toppled the medicine chief, on the left. Roman Nose! Where was Roman Nose? There, at the fore, turned in his saddle and shaking his carbine with lifted arm while he whooped his braves to the charge again.

“Cr-r-rash!”

The fifth volley drove through and through from front to rear. The charge slackened—no, it rallied—the Dog Soldiers lashed their ponies, hammered with their moccasined heels, obeyed Roman Nose and followed him. Their leaders were within ten yards of

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the end of the island. The scowling faces could be seen over the sights; every wrinkle was plain.

"Cr-r-ash!"

Down went Roman Nose, at last, in mid-leap, just about to plant his pony upon the island itself. Down went many another. The shattered ranks behind tried to stop, and could not. They parted—

"Cr-r-ash!"

The carbines were empty; the Indians streamed by, veering outward on either side, hanging low upon their ponies, racing for the prairie and for life. Cheering, the scouts sprang to their feet and fired shot after shot at close range of their revolvers. That completed the rout. The warriors bolted up the banks and into the valley on right and left.

The time had seemed like an hour, but the whole business was over in two minutes.

Now the cries of the women upon the bluffs changed to wails. The flower of the Cheyenne nation had been slaughtered, Sioux and Arapaho had fallen.

The Indians in the grass and brush along the banks were furious. They reopened the terrific fire of bullet and arrow. The scouts replied, seaching the coverts for every movement, every puff of smoke. After a time the enemy withdrew. There was a lull.

"Can the Indians do better than that charge, Grover?" Colonel "Sandy" asked anxiously.

"I've lived on the plains ever since I was a boy, general, and I never saw such a charge as that. I think they've done their level best," Scout Grover declared.

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"All right, then; we're good for 'em," announced plucky Colonel Forsyth.

Young Lieutenant Beecher crept unsteadily to him.

"I'm fatally wounded, general," he said. "I'm shot in the side."

"Oh, no, no, Beecher! It can't be as bad as that."

"Yes, sir. Goodnight."

So Lieutenant Beecher buried his face in his arm, to die like a soldier. He murmured the name of his mother. That was all. Pretty soon he became unconscious.

He was past hope. So was poor Doctor Mooers, sightless and speechless. Of the three officers, only Colonel Forsyth was able to command, and he had been wounded three times. He called for the roll of the loss among the men.

Scouts William Wilson and George Culver were dead. Old Louis Farley appeared to be fatally hurt, but was still fighting. Lou McLaughlin had been shot through the chest. Howard Morton had been shot through the back of the head, and one eye was destroyed, but he could aim with the other eye. Frank Herrington had been struck in the forehead by an arrow from an Indian boy; it had stuck fast; a comrade had cut off the shaft, and left the point in; then a bullet had glanced across and taken the point with it. Frank had bound his handkerchief around his head and had fought on.

Sergeant McCall was wounded. Lad Hudson Farley had been shot through the shoulder, but he said nothing about it until after dark.

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In all, two officers and four scouts were dead or dying, one officer and eight scouts were disabled, and eight other scouts were wounded. That made twenty-three out of the fifty-one.

The river bed and the prairie were strewn with ponies and not a few warriors. Thirty-five bodies could be counted. Roman Nose lay where he had fallen, with his sash not the only crimson showing against the bronze. Three warriors were stretched within twenty feet of the rifle pits. They had charged clear upon the island and part way into it!

Scout Jack Stillwell and his two partners ran in and joined the company. Jack said that he had killed Roman Nose—had pulled upon him and knew that the ball had struck. The squaws were wailing in a chant that rose and sank and rose again. Tomtoms were being beaten. The Indians had assembled—matters looked like another charge. A chief appeared to be rallying the warriors. The scouts saved their ammunition; did not shoot, at that distance.

Sharp Grover asserted that the chief was urging the warriors to try again.

"Once more," he was saying, "and we will bring the white dogs' scalps to our lodge fires."

Scout Grover stood up, put both hands to his mouth, and shouted at the top of his lungs, in Sioux.

"Hello, old fellow! Got any more people for killing? This is pretty tough, hey?"

The chief stared in astonishment.

"You speak straight," he shouted back.

The island men busied themselves enlarging their

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pits, binding wounds as best they could with handkerchiefs and strips of clothing, and digging a trench to the water.

Near noon the second charge was attempted. The scouts were ready; they held their fire until the foremost warriors were within one hundred yards; then they let drive. This time the charge was not so fierce; no Roman Nose led, and the ranks broke at the third volley. Hooray!

Now the Indians rode around and around in a wide circle, shaking their fists and their weapons, and hooting and threatening.

Another medicine man capered, upon his pony, away off toward the bluffs. Six of the best shots on the island aimed high, so as to be sure to reach him, and pulled triggers together. With a great yell he tumbled like a stone; his pony ran for the bluffs, and the women shrieked louder than ever.

About three o'clock a third attack was made. The Indians hoped that by this time the island men would be so exhausted by heat and thirst and wounds that they could not resist. The whole force of warriors rushed by horse and foot across the valley, from either side, to storm both ends of the island.

The scouts waited, received them with bullet after bullet from the repeaters; caught them as they vaulted into the dry bed; and although several did gain the low foot of the island not one stayed there alive.

This discouraged the enemy. The Cheyennes, Sioux and Arapahos ranged themselves at long shot, and sat and rested, or dashed back and forth.



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## BOYS' BOOK OF BORDER BATTLES

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The island was suffering—Colonel Forsyth was in torment from his head and legs. Nevertheless—

“We’re all right, boys,” he said. “Not a shot has been wasted. The advantage is ours. First, we’ve beaten them off; they know they can’t lick us. Second, we can get water by digging only a few feet. Third, for food, horse and mule meat is lying around loose in any quantity. And last, we’ve plenty of ammunition. So we’ll win out yet. Now while we’ve time let’s connect all the pits with a parapet of the saddles and ammunition boxes and horse carcasses. Put the saddle blankets down for the wounded, and be cutting strips of meat from the animals, to dry. And start a well. One thing’s certain: those Indians won’t attack us at night. They never do. It isn’t Indian custom. So we’ll have peace till morning, and a chance to rest. After dark we’ll send two men out, for Fort Wallace, to get help. They can take my field map and compass, and I think they’ll get through.”

These were cheering words, just as to be expected from a commander like “Sandy” Forsyth. After dark volunteers were called for, to crawl through the enemy’s line and make afoot for Fort Wallace, one hundred and ten miles across the Indian country. Scouts Pete Trudeau and Jack Stillwell were selected. They set out at midnight, in their stockinged feet, walking backward so that their tracks should mingle with the in-pointing moccasin tracks in the sand.<sup>1</sup>

Tonight a heavy thunder shower drenched the island.

<sup>1</sup> For the story of the adventures of Scouts Trudeau and Stillwell, see “Relief for Beecher’s Island,” in “Boys’ Book of Frontier Fighters.”

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## BEECHER'S ISLAND (1868)

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It helped. The men lay quietly, with guards posted. They did not dare to light fires. The Indian camp was wailing and chanting. Before full daylight a party of mounted warriors again approached the island. They acted as though they thought that the white men might have abandoned it and were trying to escape by the trail down the river. This would have pleased the Cheyennes and all; they had left the down river route open, still, for a bait.

The scouts crouched close; waited; gave them a volley that killed two and scattered the others.

There were no more attacks today. The island was under siege, at long range. The men dug their well deeper; they strengthened their breastworks; gathered arrows and twigs and boiled a little horse flesh, for the wounded, in an old pickle jar that was in Colonel Forsyth's saddle-bags.

Even if Scouts Trudeau and Stillwell had won free it would be some days before they reached Fort Wallace, and two or three days longer before help arrived.

Tonight Scouts Pliley and Whitney were started out. They were forced back, before morning; could not find a hole. This night most of the Indian bodies disappeared; the Indians had been heard, creeping to them and dragging them away. Roman Nose had vanished. Only the three bodies near the breastworks remained.

On the third day the Indian women had left the bluffs; but the warriors stayed, watchful. A party of them advanced with a white flag.

"Sign to them to keep off," Colonel Forsyth ordered of Scout Grover. "Tell them this is no peace com-

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## BOYS' BOOK OF BORDER BATTLES

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mission. Shoot the first fellow who comes within range."

It was thought that the Indians hoped to be given the three bodies.

Today the island men buried their own dead, while the Indians fired at long range. Lieutenant Beecher and four scouts were tucked to rest beneath the sand. Doctor Mooers moaned occasionally. He could not last much longer; lay stupidly, but seemed to know where he was, for once in a while he reached and touched Colonel Forsyth's foot.

Scouts Pliley and Donovan volunteered to try again with a message for Fort Wallace. It was brave men's duty. The chances were that Scouts Trudeau and Stillwell had been captured. Then the Indians would be looking for other messengers—and capture meant torture. How was it possible for any white man to cross the one hundred miles of plains without being caught?

Colonel "Sandy" wrote a courageous dispatch. He dated it at Delaware Creek, but he really was on the Arikaree River—which shows that he had entered unknown country.

On Delaware Creek, Republican River, Sept. 19, 1868.  
To Colonel Bankhead, or Commanding Officer, Fort Wallace:

I sent you two messengers on the night of the 17th instant, informing you of my critical condition. I tried to send two more last night, but they did not succeed in passing the Indian pickets, and returned. If the others have not arrived, then hasten at once to my assistance. I have eight badly wounded and ten slightly wounded men to take in, and every animal I had was killed save seven which the Indians stampeded. Lieutenant Beecher is dead, and Acting Assistant Surgeon Mooers probably cannot live the night out. He was hit in

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## BEECHER'S ISLAND (1868)

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the head Thursday, and has spoken but one rational word since. I am wounded in two places, in the right thigh and my left leg broken below the knee. The Cheyennes numbered 450 or more. Mr. Grover says they never fought so before. They were splendidly armed with Spencer and Henry rifles. We killed at least thirty-five of them, and wounded many more, besides killing and wounding a quantity of their stock. They carried off most of their killed during the night, but three of their men fell into our hands. I am on a little island, and have still plenty of ammunition left. We are living on mule and horse meat, and are entirely out of rations. If it was not for so many wounded I would come in and take the chances of whipping them if attacked. They are evidently sick of their bargain.

"Bring all the wagons and ambulances you can spare," Colonel Forsyth added. "I can hold out here *for six days longer*, if absolutely necessary, but please lose no time."

This night of September 19 Scouts Pliley and Donovan took the message out. They did not return; when day dawned they were still absent. They must have got a little way, for no shots nor shouts had been heard.

The Indians in sight gradually lessened. The island men ventured to steal to their former camp; they scraped some grains of coffee from the ground and brought in a couple of camp kettles. The mule and horse meat was spoiling rapidly, but they sprinkled gun-powder upon it to kill the odor, and cooked it.

A coyote wandered near. They shot him and ate him.

Between times they gathered at their colonel's pit, and talked things over with him. He remained true to his name "Sandy"—never was down-cast, never gave up, never asked for extra attention. Various schemes for relief were proposed. The little Jew

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## BOYS' BOOK OF BORDER BATTLES

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proffered a plan for tolling more coyotes within range and shooting them. It sounded like a foolish plan, and he was laughed at by the men.

"That will do," Colonel Forsyth rebuked. "The boy is inexperienced, but he deserves all the more credit for his willingness. Remember, he was among those who volunteered to go out with Stillwell, the first night. I think that under the circumstances he is doing as well as you older men."

This was so. The undersized Jew boy had proved his metal. At fighting, nursing, guarding, eating horse meat, he had borne his part and more than his part. One man, the largest and the strongest in the company, had cowered at the first attack and shown himself to be utterly worthless. He was despised.

The little Jew found some wild plums, and gave them to the wounded. The men gathered more, on the end of the island and on the banks; gathered the spiny fruit of the prickly pear cactus. The fine needles stuck in their lips and tongues.

Colonel "Sandy's" thigh was hurting him cruelly. He begged the men to cut the bullet out. They would not; it lay close against the large artery there, and they were afraid that he would bleed to death. Then he cut it out, himself, with his razor, and felt better.

Once they lifted him upon a blanket, so that he might survey the country. A skulking Indian shot, and they dropped him upon his broken leg. The bone ends were driven through the flesh and he felt worse.

September 22, the sixth day, dawned, and no rescue was in sight. By the sun and the rains and the night

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## BEECHER'S ISLAND (1868)

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chill and the flies, the wounded were suffering dreadfully. The meat was sickening; the whole place reeked with the carcasses. Even the unwounded were growing weak. So Colonel "Sandy" called the men to him, and spoke.

"You know the situation as well as I do, boys. Some of us are helpless, but aid must not be expected too soon. Our messengers may not be able to get through to Wallace, or they may have lost their way and be delayed. You have stood by me like heroes. I don't ask you to stay and starve. We can't live on this horse meat forever. The Indians have gone; we've given them such a lesson that I don't think they'll attack again. Those of you who are strong enough had better try for escape. You can't do any good by staying, and if you use care I believe you'll get away. The rest of us will take our chances here."

"Never, colonel!" they shouted.

"No, sir!" Sergeant McCall, the ex-brigadier general, added. "Not much, sir! We've fought together, and if need be we'll die together!"

Not a man left the island.

The message to Fort Wallace had said: "I can hold out here for six days longer, if absolutely necessary." The six days would expire on September 25. The men swiftly grew weaker. The dried meat all was gone, the cooked meat had been eaten; only the carcasses remained, and they—faugh! Soon the island was upon the shortest of short rations. Every mouthful of soup had to be swallowed with eyes and nostrils closed tight. By the evening of September 24 no one was strong

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## BOYS' BOOK OF BORDER BATTLES

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enough to leave the island, afoot, even if he planned to. Matters looked very dubious. Scouts Trudeau and Stillwell had been out seven nights and days; and this was the eighth day for the island.

The morning of September 25, the ninth day, was clear and hot, after a beautiful sunrise. Dark moving objects were seen upon the hills far to the south.

"Injuns!"

"They've come back!"

The men stared with bleared, swimming eyes.

"Well, we'll get some fresh horse meat, anyhow."

They were still gritty, those Forsyth scouts.

"Wait! Isn't that a dog? Looks like Doctor Fitzgerald's greyhound."

Doctor Fitzgerald was the post surgeon at Fort Wallace.

Scout Sharp Grover leaped to his feet and flung his carbine into the air.

"By the Heavens above us, boys, there's an ambulance! It's the soldiers! We're rescued."

The black troopers of Company H, Tenth United States Cavalry, under Captain and Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel Louis H. Carpenter, poured down the hill slope and across the valley. Scouts Trudeau and Stillwell had reached Fort Wallace; so had Scouts Pliley and Donovan. Scout Donovan was guiding the "brunettes," and Stillwell was coming with Colonel Bankhead.

The starved island men feebly cheered; they had no words to waste—they rushed the foremost riders, clung

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## BEECHER'S ISLAND (1868)

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to the saddles and tore at the saddle pockets, crazy for food.

But Colonel Forsyth—

Unable to rise, burning with fever and gaunt with hunger, he half lay in his pit, pretending to read a tattered old book. It was a paper-bound copy of "Oliver Twist." He dared not join in the excitement; he was afraid that he would break down—he had to be the soldier and the commanding officer.

Colonel Carpenter galloped in. Colonel "Sandy" closed his book, looked up with a wan smile, and stretched out his quivering hand.

"Welcome to Beecher's Island, colonel."



## CHAPTER XV

### TO BLACK KETTLE'S VILLAGE WITH CUSTER (1868)

#### WHEN THE BAND PLAYED "GARRYOWEN"

**T**HE Peace Commission held a meeting in Chicago in October. It decided that the plains Indians should not be permitted to travel beyond their reservations without written leave.

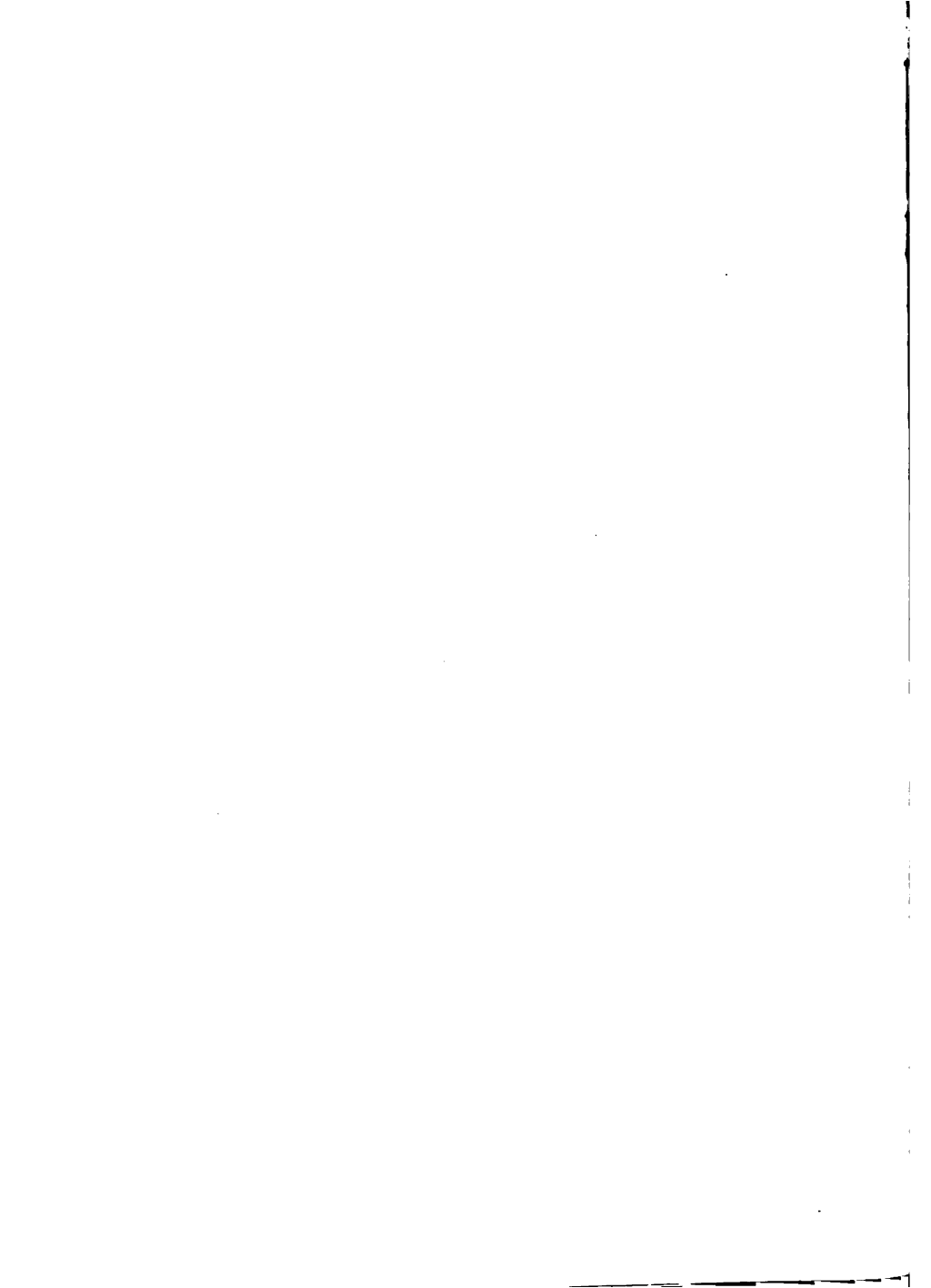
General Sheridan determined that the only way to punish the bands that had been raiding and had refused to come in to the agencies was by a winter campaign. If he might strike the Indians in their winter villages, destroy their provisions and shelter, they would have to come in, or else starve and freeze.

The only question was, whether white soldiers could travel the winter plains trail, and be in shape to battle at the end of it. Old Jim Bridger, the famous Rocky Mountain trapper and trader, told General Sheridan that a winter campaign against the Indians was impossible; an Indian in a buffalo robe could shiver himself warm, but every soldier would freeze to death. Scout Buffalo Bill brought word that the Indians were moving south, seeking winter quarters in a better country than open Kansas.

Little Phil laughed at Jim Bridger and listened to Buffalo Bill. He directed General George A. Custer to lead the Seventh Cavalry out of Fort Dodge (which



SURPRISE ON BLACK KETTLE'S VILLAGE



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## TO BLACK KETTLE'S VILLAGE (1868)

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is today Dodge City), on the Arkansas River in southwestern Kansas, against the winter quarters of Chief Black Kettle's Cheyennes.

Brevet Major-General George Armstrong Custer, lieutenant-colonel of the Seventh Cavalry, was twenty-nine years old. He had graduated from the West Point Military Academy in June, 1861; three days afterward, as second lieutenant, Second Cavalry, he had taken part in the battle of Bull Run. He flashed through the Civil War like a meteor. At twenty-three he was already a brigadier general of cavalry and known as the Boy General with the Golden Locks. Before he was twenty-five he commanded a full cavalry division of his own and had been brevetted major-general. His Third Division of cavalry was a whirlwind; in six months it captured one hundred and eleven pieces of artillery, sixty-five battle flags, and ten thousand prisoners including seven generals; did not lose a flag or a gun, nor suffer a repulse. He himself had eleven horses shot under him.

After the war he made of the Seventh United States Cavalry a noted fighting regiment, celebrated for its dash and discipline and hard campaigns. With his long yellow hair and moustache, his buckskin suit, his crimson tie, his lithe figure, his bright blue eyes, and his perfect horsemanship, he was a cavalryman long to be remembered. The Indians called him "Yellow Hair," "Long Hair," and "White Chief with the Long Yellow Hair." His soldiers called him "Old Curly," and "Old Jack" because the initials on his kit chest were G. A. C.

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## BOYS' BOOK OF BORDER BATTLES

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The base for the winter campaign was to be new Camp Supply, one hundred miles south of Fort Dodge, in northwestern Indian Territory which is present Oklahoma. Uncle John Smith, or Red Eye, a Cheyenne trader, had picked it out for the army. On November 12 General Custer started for it, with eleven of his twelve troops of cavalry, four hundred wagons and an infantry escort.

General Sheridan, bringing reinforcements for the camp, arrived on November 21. The march down from Fort Hays had been terrible, through early blizzards, and across the Arkansas River where ice floated.

Tonight it began to snow. That made no difference. General Sheridan was certain that the Cheyennes of Chief Black Kettle, the Kiowas of Chief Satanta, the Arapahos of Chief Little Raven, with Comanches and Apaches, were snugly quartered somewhere in the south, counting upon the winter to block the white soldiers off.

"I shall be ready to march in twenty-four hours," General Custer said. This evening the Seventh Regiment band stood out in the snow and serenaded General Sheridan.

Little Phil issued his orders; they were short, like himself.

"To proceed south, in the direction of the Antelope Hills, thence toward the Washita River, the supposed winter seat of the hostile tribes; to destroy their villages and ponies; to kill or hang all warriors and bring back all women and children."

Yes, they were short orders, and harsh orders; but

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## TO BLACK KETTLE'S VILLAGE (1868)

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these Indians had been murdering settlers by the hundred, torturing prisoners, both men and women; stealing women and children and abusing them. They declined to come in to their agencies. If they wished to act like bandits, then they would have to be treated as bandits.

It snowed in earnest the next evening, November 22. When reveille for the Seventh Cavalry was blown at three o'clock in the morning of November 23, the snow was over a foot deep and still falling fast; the air was biting cold; the men trudged about in drifts to their boot tops, the horses huddled.

"How will this do for a 'winter campaign,' general?" Adjutant Myles Moylan shouted.

"Just the thing!"

Old Curly galloped across the camp, to bid goodby to General Sheridan. General Sheridan's tent could scarcely be seen in the snow and darkness.

"Is that you, Custer? What do you think about the storm?"

Even the tough Sheridan was a little dubious. But nothing daunted Custer.

"Nothing could be better, general. We can move but now the Indians can't. If the snow stays on the ground for a week I'll bring you back proof that we've found them."

Before it was light the eleven companies of the Seventh Cavalry sallied bravely into the teeth of the storm. The crack mounted band played "The Girl I Left Behind Me." The infantry soldiers in the camp stuck out their heads and cheered.

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There was General Custer, in wolf-fur cap, buffalo-fur vest under his army overcoat, buffalo-fur mittens, and buffalo-fur overshoes.

There were the eight hundred troopers, in various forms of attire, buffalo overshoes, buffalo caps, buffalo mittens, scarfs about their heads—anything to keep them warm.

There were twelve Osage Indian scouts, under old Chief Hard Rope and Chief Little Beaver, with Lieutenant Thomas Lebo as their white chief.

There were the white scouts: California Joe, Jack Corbin, and Romero who was not white, but was half Indian and half Mexican. Everybody on the plains knew California Joe, the old-timer trapper and rover. He had an enormous nose, usually red; was "brass mounted" with bushy red whiskers covering his face; his close-set little blue eyes twinkled through. Today he wore a greasy slouch hat tied down scoop shape over his ears with a dirty scarf; long blue army overcoat with singed tails and belted about his waist by a rope; cowhide boots wrapped in gunny sacking; fur mittens. He rode a mule and carried a long-barreled army musket.

Only a few tents were taken. The soldiers' baggage was limited to clothing. A wagon outfit bore rations and horse forage for thirty days.

On the way down from Fort Dodge to Camp Supply a northward-leading trail of a war party had been crossed. General Custer planned to catch the return trail through the snow, and follow it to the winter village.

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## TO BLACK KETTLE'S VILLAGE (1868)

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The storm ceased. The thermometer registered seven below zero, but the sky cleared.

"'Trav'lin' good overhead today, how are you, general?" California Joe wheezed.

They all crossed southward into the valley of the South Canadian, at Antelope Hills on the western border of present Oklahoma. They were getting right into the Indians' winter country. One hundred miles up the South Canadian was where Kit Carson had surprised the big villages at Adobe Walls, four years before.

This was red man's land. No roads penetrated, no white men had been in here. The Indians hunted the buffalo, the wild turkey, the deer and the panther, and lived well.

Major Joel H. Elliot with three companies was sent up-river to scout for the war party trail. He was given one day's rations and forage; no wagons, of course. If he struck the trail he was to send back word and follow the Indians until the main column overtook him.

Major Elliot and his two hundred troopers rode up the winding, red-soil South Canadian, which flowed icy and swift among the rounded bare hills and snowy plateaus.

General Custer crossed the river. In hauling the wagons over, the men's clothing was soaked to the waist.

The last of the wagons was just climbing out for the high ground at the base of Antelope Hills, and General Custer was alone, sitting his horse, impatiently wait-



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ing to order "Advance," when he saw a black figure riding rapidly in across the snow, from the southwest.

An express, from Major Elliot! The figure proved to be Scout Jack Corbin. He reported. The Major Elliot column had struck the fresh trail of one hundred and fifty Indians; it veered for the southeast; he was pursuing hard.

Hurrah!

"Can you catch Elliot if I furnish you with another horse, Corbin?"

"Yes, sir. I can try, anyhow."

In a moment Scout Corbin had galloped away again, into the snow and the wilderness. Major Elliot was to keep pursuing; the main column would march south and cut in on him. If the trail changed direction, he was to let General Custer know. If he was not overtaken by eight o'clock this night, he should make camp and wait.

The hour was almost eleven o'clock. General Custer gave the column only twenty minutes for getting ready. The wagons were to be left under a guard of eighty men and the officer of the day. Marching equipment was to be reduced to one blanket each, one hundred rounds of ammunition, oats, a little coffee and hard tack. But the eighty men thought it hard luck, to be counted out.

And one officer was unhappy. He was Captain Louis McLane Hamilton, of the historic Alexander Hamilton family. As officer of the day he had to stay with the wagons.

"If you can find anybody who'll trade places with you, I'll agree to it," Old Curly said at last.

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## TO BLACK KETTLE'S VILLAGE (1868)

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Captain Hamilton was made glad when he discovered that Second Lieutenant Edward Mathey was snow blind. Lieutenant Mathey had said nothing about that, for fear that he might be ordered to remain, himself. Now he consented to trade with Captain Hamilton, for he knew that he might be only a handicap, on a forced march.

In precisely twenty minutes the eight companies, less the eighty men of the wagon guard, trotted for the south.

The sun had softened the snow; the horses sank to their knees; the route was cut by washes and broken by hummocks. In all the lonely treeless waste there was not a moving object except themselves. They rode for five hours; saw no sign of Major Elliot. General Custer grew anxious as his eyes constantly swept the snowy expanse.

The sun was low when finally they found the trail—the Indians' trail, and the trail of Major Elliot's column, beside it.

"War trail. No squaws. Made dis morning," Little Beaver grunted.

The General Custer column hastened, to overtake the Elliot column before it got into trouble, or had done all the fighting. At dusk the blackly timbered valley of the Washita River showed ahead. They descended; entered the timber in the dark. The twin trails led on. The Custer men were tired and hungry. They had eaten nothing since four o'clock in the morning; the horses had had no food and scarcely a mouthful to drink.

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## BOYS' BOOK OF BORDER BATTLES

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At nine o'clock they came upon Major Elliot, camped and waiting. This had been Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, November 26, 1868! But anybody who rode with Old Curly might expect such trips.

The camp was in the timber along a head-waters creek of the Washita River, west central Indian territory or Oklahoma.

"One hour's halt," said General Custer. The moon would then give light. Little Beaver wished to wait for day. General Custer smiled to himself. He knew what was the matter. An Indian killed in the dark cannot find his way to the happy hunting grounds!

There were hot coffee and hardtack for the officers and men; water and oats for the horses. At ten o'clock the whole column was in the saddle again. The moon had risen higher. The night was soundless save for the creak of leather and the rasp of hoof. Mystery wrapped this world of stream and forest and plain. The Indian village might be within a mile, or half a mile, or ten miles. Who knew?

Little Beaver and Koom-la-manche or Trotter guided on foot. General Custer and the scouts followed, three hundred yards behind. Then the cavalry companies, farther behind. No one was to light a pipe; no one was to speak above a whisper.

In an hour the two Osages stopped short. General Custer rode on—

"What's the matter?" he asked, of Little Beaver.

"Me don't know," said Little Beaver, "but me smell smoke."

Hah! The other scouts arrived. Romero the half

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## TO BLACK KETTLE'S VILLAGE (1868)

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Indian could not smell any smoke. None of the white men could smell any smoke. Even California Joe, with his big nose, smelled no smoke.

"These Osages are gettin' skeered," California Joe asserted. "'Tain't their kind o' campaignin'—this hyar marchin' by night an' not knowin' whar you're goin'. Guess they smell spooks."

In about half a mile the two Osages halted again.

"Me told you so," Little Beaver uttered, pointing.

Sure enough, at the edge of the timber one hundred yards on the left there glowed the coals of a tiny fire. That had been a "long" smell!

Was this the war-party camp? If so, and the Indians wakened, then the alarm would be given. General Custer fidgeted nervously, while the scouts stole forward. But the Osages searched the ground and said that the fire was not a war-party fire. It had been built by boys, to warm themselves while herding ponies.

Good! The village to which the pony herd belonged could not be more than two or three miles away.

"Forward! Be quiet!"

In the moonlight the column advanced, up hill and down, following the trail through snowy draw and out once more.

General Custer now stuck close to the two Osages. One or the other of them always climbed each ridge, first, to crouch and peer over. Presently something seemed to have been sighted. The second Osage ran back, to General Custer's bridle.

"What is it?" General Custer was almost breathless.

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"Heaps Injuns down dere."

General Custer went forward afoot with his orderly. They peered, lying flat, from the little ridge. Down below there was a dark mass of animals bunched together; farther on, a half frozen river gleamed icily where it wended amidst the leafless trees. The river was the Washita.

The two Osages had said not another word.

"Those may be buffalo. Why do you think Indians are down there?"

"Hear dog bark."

At that instant a dog did bark thinly in the cold still night. A bell faintly tinkled.

"They're ponies," the general whispered to his panting orderly. "Buffaloes aren't in the habit of wearing bells, in this country."

He was gladly turning, to tell the column, when another sound drifted to him. It was the crying of a baby. And that sound struck through to his heart. Women and children were there, as well as warriors and ponies and dogs. He was going to drive them all out into the open: into the hungry cold.

First he brought his officers forward, to show them. They removed their sabers, so that no noise should be made. Sharp ears lightly slumbered in that distant village. The officers also crouched and peered. Midnight had passed. The ghostly glimmer of the white lodges could be glimpsed, along the river beyond the pony herd.

Down behind the ridge again, General Custer explained his plan. With his saber scabbard he drew a

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## TO BLACK KETTLE'S VILLAGE (1868)

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sketch upon the snow crust. The village was to be surrounded; the attack signal would be sounded at day-break.

Major Joel Elliot, who had fought in the Indiana Volunteer cavalry during the Civil War, took Troops G, H and M; circuited to the left or east to get in the rear of the village from that side. Captain and Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel William Thompson, who had served through the war with the Iowa cavalry, took Troops B and F, and made circuit to the right, for the rear of the village from that end. Captain and Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel Edward Myers, who had won his way up from private in the old First Dragoons, was to take Troops E and I and post himself in the timber on the right. General Custer himself, with Troops A, C, D and K, and the scouts, the band, and the forty sharpshooters, afoot, of First Lieutenant and Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel William Winer Cooke, the Canadian who had served through the war with the New York cavalry, would charge straight down. The attack signal should be the first notes of the band.

The Major Elliot and Colonel Thompson detachments had ridden away, to left and right. It was two o'clock, and growing bitter cold. The Custer and Myers men were permitted to dismount, but ordered to stay at the heads of their horses and hold the reins. There must be no moving about, no making of fires, no talking, no stamping of feet.

Those were long, cruel four hours, until daybreak. Officers and men had no way to keep from freezing, except by cowering in their overcoats. And they all

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knew that the Indians were many, would fight desperately for their families and ponies; had the advantage of position, in the trees and under the river banks. After the first surprise, the bullets and arrows would fly.

"They'll fight like demons. Are you glad you came, Hamilton?"

"Yes, sir. The only person I'm sorry for is Mathey. He'll miss a rousing time. As for me, boys, you know how I always feel. I want a soldier's death. When my time comes I hope it will be a bullet through the heart, in battle."

Thus spoke Captain Louis McLane Hamilton, the young New Yorker, who had been brevetted for bravery at Chancellorsville and Gettysburg both.

Some of the officers threw their cavalry capes over their heads and slept upon the snow. The men squatted, whispered low and huddled. The horses drooped and shivered, their nostrils white with frost. The moon was being veiled with clouds.

The Osages were in solemn council, sitting in a circle. They had not much hope of victory. The white chief with the yellow hair might fail in his surprise; he was out-numbered; the village looked strong. They feared that to save himself he would trade them off—he would surrender them to the Cheyennes. Ugh!

"The flag that he carries is the big white medicine," said old Hard Rope. "That will be guarded; it will not be taken into danger. Let us stay near it, in the fight. Then if the white chief is winning we will help him; if he is losing we can run away."

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## TO BLACK KETTLE'S VILLAGE (1868)

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"It is good talk," the other Osages agreed.

About four o'clock the moon disappeared, and left darkness. The stinging cold increased. After a long, long time the darkness began to thin; the first grayness showed, over the hills in the east. Everything lay in utter stillness; not a dog barked, not a baby cried. The village slept.

It was the Cheyenne village of Chief Black Kettle. Down river there was another large village, of the Cheyennes and the Arapahos. Below that there was the village of the Kiowas and Comanches. Two thousand people slumbered upon the banks of the Washita. The war party from the north had come in. It had killed mail carriers between Fort Dodge and Fort Larned, in Kansas; had killed an old hunter near Fort Dodge; had killed two dispatch bearers riding for General Sheridan. It brought back scalps, but it did not know that it had brought the soldiers too.

General Custer trudged from officer to officer, awakening them. The first sergeants aroused the men, who staggered stiffly to their feet. Suddenly an alarming sight appeared. A ball of fire rose slowly into the dusky sky above the eastern ridge that separated the troops from the village in the valley.

It was like a small flaming globe. A fire arrow! A signal rocket! How had the Indians obtained a signal rocket? No matter; one of the other columns had been discovered—that was the token, spreading the word.

Up, and up, and up the flaming ball soared. It changed from reddish gold to yellow, and to blue, and to lemon—



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"How long it hangs! Why doesn't it burst?" somebody exclaimed.

While they waited for the downward curve, it flashed white and beautiful. General Custer gasped, much relieved.

"A star! The morning star, gentlemen. That's all."

They took it for a good luck omen: not Napoleon's and Sam Houston's sun of Austerlitz, but Custer's star of Austerlitz, promising "Custer's luck."

The gray had lightened the darkness. Morning had come at last.

"You will make ready," Old Curly said. "Overcoats and haversacks are to be left here; one man from each company to remain as guard. Colonel Myers, you will move out to the right, and when within striking distance wait for the signal to attack; then you will charge at the same time with the other columns. You had better dismount part of your men."

Colonel Myers moved out.

"Remember, not a shot is to be fired until the attack has been signaled," the general directed again. And the caution passed.

The troopers stripped off their haversacks and overcoats, and piled them up.

"Mount!"

They climbed the ridge. Captain Robert West's squadron of two companies deployed on the right; Captain Louis Hamilton's squadron deployed on the left, with Colonel "Queen's Own" Cooke's sharpshooters before it. General Custer and his bugler orderly led

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in the center, with the band riding behind, and the stars and stripes and the regimental colors escorted by the smart Osages.

Down from the ridge they cantered. The pony herd was farther away than they had thought; three quarters of a mile, at least. The ponies scented the cavalry horses; snorted and ran. But if the Indians heard, they might imagine that the ponies were only getting hungry and restless.

The dawn was brightening rapidly. The village would soon be astir. General Custer feared that he would not arrive in time. He could see smoke welling sluggishly from the pointed tops of the lodges, into the dark trees. The lodges occupied both sides of the river. And still not a voice was heard, not a dog barked, not a movement was to be made out.

Where were the Colonel Thompson and Major Elliot detachments? Much depended upon them. Had they been able to take position? All the columns should strike together. Any one of them was too small to go it alone.

Old Curly glanced over his shoulder. The band was following close. Every man had his instrument at his lips. The band master, his cheeks puffed against his cornet, was keeping his eyes glued to his general's back, awaiting the signal to play.

Hah! Suddenly a single rifle shot rang sharp and clear and startling, from the lower end of the village. General Custer turned quickly in his saddle.

"Garryowen!" he cried. "Now! Play!"

The tune burst upon the frosty air:

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Our hearts so stout have got us fame,  
For soon 'tis known from whence we came;  
Where'er we go they dread the name  
Of Garryowen in glory.

It was the marching tune and battle tune of the Seventh Cavalry—had been the marching tune and battle tune of the Custer Third Division in the Civil War.

The notes rent the stillness. Cheers answered like echoes—the Colonel Thompson column and the Major Elliot column and the Colonel Myers column had heard, and were charging.

“The charge, bugler! Hurrah, men! Give it to 'em!”

“Hooray!”

The surprise was complete. Only Chief Black Kettle had caught the trampling of the Major Elliot's horses in the snow; had sprung to the door of his black lodge and fired his rifle, as an alarm.

The soldiers rushed into the village from all sides. The band had dropped back; upon a little knoll it blared “Garryowen” over and over and over. Old Curly, his yellow hair streaming from under his wolf-fur cap, his revolver high, led his line; Adjutant Myles Moylan was at his one stirrup—strapping Sergeant-Major Walter Kennedy forged to the other. Captain Hamilton and Captain West were at left and right.

“Now, men, keep cool, fire low and not too rapidly,” Captain Hamilton cautioned, to his squadron.

The troopers yelled, the horses leaped. The line

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struck the first Cheyenne lodges and opened with bullet from carbine and revolver.

The lodges boiled with half-clad Indians. Men, women and children darted in every direction, into the trees and into the river. They also opened, with ball and arrow. Captain Hamilton lurched from his saddle, shot through the heart. That was the end which he had wished.

Captain Alfred Barnitz of Ohio killed two Indians and was shot through the body. For this he was brevetted colonel. The village indeed battled stoutly. Black Kettle was dead—killed at the door of his lodge, in same manner that Iron Shirt the Kiowa-Apache had been killed in the Kit Carson men's charge at Adobe Walls. Koom-la-manche the Osage took his scalp. Black Kettle's wife was killed, fighting by his side. Boy Black Kettle fell. He had mounted his pony—revolver in hand had charged Captain Fred Benteen—had refused to surrender and had charged firing—had killed Captain Benteen's horse and was about to kill the captain also. Then he had died like the son of a great chief.

The warriors were fighting, the women were fighting, the boys were fighting. And worse happened. A squaw was leading a little white boy captive away. When she found that she could not escape with him she plunged her knife into him. In the lodges and in the snow white women were being treated in the same fashion.

The Custer men had crossed the river, to the main village. They held it, but the Cheyennes held the

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stream banks and the trees. There was fierce give and take for three hours. The soldiers were dismounted, to fight on foot. Thirty-eight warriors resisted savagely from a ravine; the sharpshooters at last wiped them out.

The death songs were rising—women were shrieking, children crying, soldiers cheering. The Osages found the squaws running for shelter; rounded them up with switches and herded them back into the village. They wailed, and the warriors knew that a great blow had befallen them.

Now in the lull General Custer ordered Lieutenant and Brevet Captain Algernon Smith, whose arm had been crippled in the Civil War, to count the lodges.

"Fifty-two, general," Captain Smith reported, rather breathless. "But I may have missed some. I counted in a hurry; those confounded squaws were popping at me, from inside the lodges, every step."

General Custer saw warriors gathering upon a hill below the village. He examined them through his glass. They were mounted, they were armed and fresh and wore war bonnets. This puzzled him. California Joe had driven the pony herd in—where did these mounted warriors come from?

He hastened to ask a young squaw, with Romero interpreting.

"There are many lodges below," she said. "Their warriors are coming. You will all be killed. Your scalps will dry in our fires."

That was true. The Arapahos of Little Raven, the Kiowas of Satanta and Lone Wolf, the chiefs and

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braves of the Comanches and the Apaches—they had heard the battle, they had armed and had mounted and were rallying to the rescue of the Black Kettle village.

The tables had been turned. In place of surrounding, the Yellow Hair was being surrounded. He was inside, and the enemy was outside. And his supply train and the guard of eighty men were supposed to be slowly following him in. If the Indians espied them, then goodbye to the wagons and ammunition and all.

It was the same fix that had daunted Colonel Kit Carson. General Custer knew that he must act fast. He posted his troops, to hold the enemy off. Major Elliot and fifteen enlisted men were missing. Sergeant-Major Walter Kennedy likewise had disappeared. Nobody seemed to know where they were. Captain Hamilton was dead; Captain Barnitz was thought to be dying; three enlisted men had been killed; Captain Tom Custer (the general's brother), Second Lieutenant Thomas Jefferson March (a "shave-tail" who had graduated from West Point only last June) and eleven enlisted men were wounded. One of the wounded was a little bugler boy.

A steel pointed arrow had glanced around his forehead from eye clear to opposite ear.

"Did you see the Indian who shot you?" General Custer asked, in the hospital.

Then the boy stuck his hand into his trousers pocket and drew something out.

"Anybody who thinks I didn't see that Injun can take a look at this scalp."

The guard who had been left with the overcoats and

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haversacks came bolting in for safety. The Indians from the other villages had routed them out and seized the coats and rations. But hurrah! An army wagon was lurching into the valley, its six mules at a tearing gallop, and a small escort of troopers keeping pace.

Through the skirmish line it passed, and was safe. The brave First Lieutenant and Quarter-master James M. Bell, who had twice been brevetted for gallantry in the Civil War, had brought ammunition; and how he had escaped the Indians, nobody knew.

Now while the skirmish line bristled anew the lodges were searched for wounded and skulkers; the goods were counted and piled up; the lodges were pulled down, and heaped atop, and everything set afire.

Over eleven hundred buffalo robes, four thousand arrows, two hundred and forty-one saddles, one thousand pounds of lead, five hundred pounds of powder, seven hundred pounds of tobacco, four hundred and seventy Government blankets, and so forth, and so forth: all the wealth of the Southern Cheyennes went up in flame and smoke. The Indians charged madly. Mounted companies counter-charged and forced them back.

General Custer deemed that it was high time for him to get out. It was the tail of the afternoon; early dusk threatened and he had been fighting since daylight. He had fifty-three prisoners, all women and children, and two little white children, to guard; he had eight hundred and seventy-five half-wild ponies.

He could not take the ponies. His orders were to leave none for the enemy. Four companies were told off as firing squads. The soldiers shot with tears in

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their eyes. It was the hardest task of the long day. From the hills the Indians shouted vengefully.

The bugles rang "Forward." The band had come in. In close columns, with flags flying, band playing, prisoners surrounded, the Seventh moved right down the valley, as if to attack the other villages.

This was a bold feint. The Arapahos, the Kiowas, the Comanches, the remaining Cheyennes, raced to save their lodges and families. They feared the terrible Yellow Hair, and they cleared the road. But instead of attacking, after dark Old Curly turned squarely about, marched up the valley again and took the back trail for the wagon train. He left the Indians wondering, and reached the train on the next day, November 28.

Sergeant-Major Kennedy, and the Major Joel Elliot detachment were still missing. They had last been seen in chase of a party of Indians; the scouts had searched for them in vain; nothing more could be done. They might have escaped, they might have been cut off in the hills.

Not until two weeks later were they found, where they had formed a little circle, two miles out from the village, and fought to the end.

So while the Cheyennes mourned for Black Kettle, Little Rock, and one hundred others, the Seventh Cavalry mourned young Captain Hamilton, brave Major Joel Elliot and Sergeant-Major Kennedy and eighteen troopers.



## CHAPTER XVI

### WHITE AGAINST RED AT THE ROSEBUD (1876)

#### AND THE GAMENESS OF CAPTAIN GUY HENRY

**A**LTHOUGH after the battle of the Washita the Indians began to surrender upon their agencies in Indian Territory, there were many outbreaks and many other battles in the Department of the Missouri. The Southern Cheyennes, the Kiowas, Arapahos, Comanches and Apaches did not yield entirely until the spring of 1875. Their ring-leaders were sent as prisoners to Fort Marion, near San Augustine, Florida. The plains of Kansas, Colorado and southern Nebraska were in complete possession of the white men, at last.

During the time that the southern Indians had been fighting the soldiers and settlers, the Dakota Sioux and the Northern Cheyennes had been wandering pretty much as they pleased.

All western present South Dakota had been given to the Sioux as a farming country. All the wide land adjoining, as far as the Big Horn Mountains line of central Wyoming, and from the North Platte River of Nebraska to the Yellowstone River of southeastern Montana—one hundred thousand square miles—had been given to them as their hunting grounds as long

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as the buffalo ran. No white men were to pass through without the permission of the Sioux.

The Northern Cheyennes had been granted no lands. Somehow, the Peace Commission had omitted them. But that made no difference; they went where the Sioux went.

The Sioux farming lands were very poor. They did not know how to farm, white men had failed to make a living there, the Government did not provide the schools and teachers and the food as promised; in April, 1875, the Sioux were eating ponies and wolves. They were buffalo Indians, anyway, and it was a great deal to expect of them that they should settle down and try to be like white people, when the hunting trail was open to them.

The agency Indians saw themselves starving. What was the use in being tame and good, when their relatives in the hunting grounds were free and fat and happy? A number of these Dakotas or Tetons never came in at all. They chased the elk, deer and buffalo; at ration time they sent for their share; and to show how well off they were they emptied the flour upon the prairie and wore the sacks for shirts. They had only contempt for the foolish white people and for the "coffee cooling" agency Indians.

The United States had made a bad bargain. The Crows, the Arikaras, the Mandans, the Snakes complained that the wild Indians raided them—took scalps and horses. The Crows and the others said that when they had agreed to go upon reservations the United States had engaged to protect them. Instead, now the

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Sioux knew just where to find them, but they themselves had been forbidden to make war. Wagon trains and white settlers on the borders of the hunting grounds also complained.

The Sioux, too, had grievances, as a nation. Breaking the treaty, the Northern Pacific Railroad was being surveyed south of the Yellowstone River, and through their hunting grounds. White miners were trespassing in the Black Hills of the reservation itself—the sacred Pah-sappa or Medicine Land of the Dakotas; the United States was insisting that the Sioux sell their Pah-sappa.

The head chief of the hunting Indians was Crazy Horse. Sitting Bull likewise was out, with a band. He was not a chief, but a medicine worker, and much respected for his powers. He hated the white men with a deep and lasting hatred.

"God made me an Indian. He did not make me an agency Indian, and I'll fight and die fighting before any white man can make me an agency Indian," he said.<sup>1</sup>

He was a Hunkpapa Dakota. Crazy Horse was an Oglala Dakota, but led the Northern Cheyennes also. That name, Crazy Horse, had been given him because when he was born a wild pony charged through the camp. He grew up to be a stern, fierce warrior; at twenty-six he was a war chief, bitter against the white race.

In the early winter of 1875 the Indian Bureau ordered that runners be sent out, to tell the hunting Indians that they must come into the Chief Red Cloud

<sup>1</sup> See "Sitting Bull the War Maker" in "Boys' Book of Indian Warriors."

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Agency or the Chief Spotted Tail Agency before January 31, 1876, and report; they were to be counted and listed.

None of the Sioux wished to be counted. When their numbers were not known, then they might obtain double rations, and might supply their relatives and friends who were absent.

Only a few of the hunting Indians came in. Sitting Bull already had replied, during the summer when he had been asked to talk about selling the Black Hills.

"Are you the Great Being that made me?" he demanded, of the runner. "Or was it the Great Being that made me who sent you? If He asks me to come see Him, I will go; but the big chief of the white men must come see me. I will not go to the reservation. I have no land to sell. There is plenty game here for us. We have enough ammunition. We don't want any white men."

And this winter he answered again:

"Tell the white chief to come find me. I shall not run away. He need bring no guides."

Chief Crazy Horse answered not at all.

General Phil Sheridan was directed to round up him and Sitting Bull.

General Sheridan had been promoted to lieutenant-general, and appointed to the command of the whole Division of the Missouri. This took in all the Indian country from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains, and from the Mexican border to Canada. There were the Departments of Texas, of the Missouri, of the Platte and of Dakota.

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The campaign was to be waged by the Departments of the Platte and of Dakota. Brigadier General George Crook commanded the Department of the Platte. This included Nebraska, Wyoming, north-eastern Utah as far as the Salt Lake, and eastern Idaho, with headquarters at Omaha.

Brigadier General Alfred Howe Terry commanded the Department of Dakota. This included Minnesota, Dakota and Montana, with headquarters at St. Paul.

Nobody in the army or in the Indian Bureau knew how many Indians were off the reservation. They were thought to be not more than five or six hundred. One regiment of cavalry should be able to handle them.

General Crook did try a winter attack, with one thousand men. General J. J. Reynolds and a detachment of nine cavalry companies charged into Crazy Horse's village in southern Montana, much as Custer's Seventh Cavalry had charged into Black Kettle's village; but they were driven out, they lost the ponies, they almost froze to death, and the bitter weather forced General Crook back into winter quarters, again. That stung him.

The reservation Indians heard of the stand made by the Crazy Horse people; they stole away, party after party, to join him and Sitting Bull. Fighting was a more successful life than farming. The white soldiers had struck. Now the Great Sioux and Cheyenne War of 1876 burst into flame.

Brigadier General and Brevet Major-General George Crook had graduated from West Point in 1852. He and General Sheridan had been room-mates and class-

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mates there. Except for his service in the Civil War he had been fighting Indians ever since his cadet days.

As a lieutenant he had been wounded by an arrow while campaigning in Oregon and Washington. As a lieutenant-colonel he had subdued the Pai-Utes and Warm-Spring Snakes of Nevada and Idaho. As commander of the Department of Arizona he had beaten the crafty Apaches.

He was noted not only as a skilled and stubborn Indian fighter but also as a scout; had studied Indians, had learned to read a trail and the sign language, and to take care of himself in the open; was fond of riding alone, ahead of his column, with rifle or double-barrel shotgun, hunting game, picking up rocks and collecting birds' eggs, and viewing the country and the ways of the wild life.

While very strict in discipline, he cared little for show. He usually dressed, upon the trail, in a canvas hunting-coat, old corduroy trousers, and felt hat.

The Indians knew him as a just man and a good friend as well as a stanch enemy. He could go wherever they could go, he drank only water, he never tired and never showed fear. Because of his quiet garb and his shrewdness they called him the Gray Fox.

He waited merely for the grass to get green and the ground to dry, so that his horses might travel and live off the country. Then he organized another column, for a summer campaign into the Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull domain far from military posts and supplies. He was to march in from the south. A column under General Terry was to march in on the north. A third

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column under Colonel John Gibbon of Fort Ellis in central Montana was to march in from the west.

The Crook column—forty-nine officers and one thousand and two men—assembled at Fort Fetterman, on the North Platte River in Wyoming one hundred miles above old Fort Laramie.

There were ten troops of the Third Cavalry and five troops of the Second Cavalry, all under Colonel William B. Royall of the Third. Colonel Royall was a handsome Virginian, and a veteran. He had a heavy gray moustache, bushy dark eyebrows, keen blue eyes, and a bald head scarred from a Confederate saber during the Civil War.

Major Andrew W. Evans commanded the ten troops of the Third. The Third had served against the Apaches in Arizona, with General Crook, and before his time, too; of late had been stationed in the Platte country.

Captain and Brevet Major Henry E. Noyes commanded the five troops of the Second. The Second had been serving in this Department of the Platte for some years, protecting the Union Pacific Railroad and chasing Sioux, Cheyennes, Arapahos and Crows.

So the Third and the Second understood Indians and could be relied upon.

There were three companies of the Ninth Infantry and two companies of the Fourth Infantry. The "walk-a-heaps" were commanded by Major Alexander Chambers of the Fourth—an old soldier who had earned brevets at Shiloh, Vicksburg, and elsewhere.

Captain George M. Randall of the Twenty-third In-

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fantry was chief of scouts. He was another Crook man, from Arizona; had campaigned there and had been in charge of an Apache reservation.

Weazened, sun-dried old Tom Moore was chief of the pack train. General Crook was the "daddy" of the United States army pack-mule system; had organized it and used it with great success. Tom Moore had bossed the pack trains in Arizona; there was nothing about a mule that he did not know.

Charley Russell, a Government packer and wagon master on the plains, was wagon-train chief. The guides were Frank Gruard, Louis Richaud and Baptiste Pourrier.

Guide Gruard was a Sandwich Islander, dark of skin, with long black hair. He had lived with Chief Crazy Horse—while riding pony express had been captured by the Sioux, who had thought that he was a Sioux, himself. 'Later in this campaign he was almost captured again.<sup>1</sup>

Louis Richaud was part French and part Sioux. So was Baptiste Pourrier, whom the soldiers called "Big Bat," to separate him from another Baptiste, "Little Bat."

A party of war correspondents went along, by permission of General Sheridan, to write up the campaign for their newspapers. They were Joseph Wasson of the San Francisco *Alta California*, the Philadelphia *Press* and the New York *Tribune*; Robert E. Strahorn of the Denver *Rocky Mountain News* and other papers; T. B. McMillan of the Chicago *Inter-Ocean*; R. B.

<sup>1</sup> See "The Sibley Scout" in "Boys' Book of Frontier Fighters."



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Davenport of the New York *Herald*; and John F. Finerty of the Chicago *Times*.

The Gray Fox arrived at Fort Fetterman and took command on May 28, this 1876. He started the very next day, May 29, and headed into the north, for the fastnesses of the outlawed Sioux and Cheyennes.

With its fifteen companies of cavalry, its five companies of infantry, its one hundred and three six-mule wagons and its almost one thousand pack mules, the column was the strongest that had yet marched against the Indians of the West.

The Crows and Shoshonis or Snakes had been asked to help. The Sioux had stolen the Wyoming hunting grounds from the Crows; they had always fought the Shoshonis, to get horses. The Crows now lived upon a reservation in Montana, the Shoshonis in western Wyoming.

Crazy Horse had sent word to the Gray Fox.

“When you touch the Tongue River I shall fight you.”

The Gray Fox was an old hand at the Indian game. The Third Cavalry knew, and the Second Cavalry and the infantry soon found out. He started with the infantry every morning at six o'clock sharp; the cavalry broke camp at seven-thirty and caught up. In this manner the march was hastened.

They all marched right through the forbidden Powder River country; on June 7 they “touched” the Tongue River, in northern Wyoming about fifteen miles from the Montana line. Skirmish companies had been kept in the advance, bugle calls silenced. General

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Crook was enjoying himself. Every day he had ridden ahead of the column, to hunt; and he had found some rare birds' eggs.

Crazy Horse was alert. In the morning of June 9 he attacked. The white soldiers' camp had been pitched upon the south bank of the Tongue, at the Montana line. At half-past six o'clock the Sioux and Cheyennes opened fire from the bluffs across the river; they aimed at the army tents and riddled them, but the soldiers were outside.

The infantry replied with their "long Tom" Springfield; a battalion of the Third Cavalry under Captain and Brevet Colonel Anson Mills the Texan charged the bluffs. The Indians scampered away. They had done little harm other than wounding two men, killing several horses and mules, and boring a hole through the stove pipe of Colonel Mills' tent. But Chief Crazy Horse had made good his threat.

When the dispatches to the Eastern papers announced that Colonel Mills' stove pipe had been punctured, a Southern editor criticized him for having gone into action wearing a stove-pipe silk hat!

The Gray Fox moved southwest seventeen miles to a better camp, at the juncture of Big Goose Creek and Little Goose Creek, northern Wyoming. Here he waited for the Crows and Shoshonis to join him.

The Crows came first, brought by Frank Gruard and Louis Richaud. They had been afraid that the Sioux had driven the white chief back; now when they were shown the camp they charged in with a great whoop.

They numbered one hundred and seventy-five war-

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riors, each man with two ponies; were well armed with breech-loading rifles. Their hair was bushed on top of their heads, Crow fashion.

In a jiffy they raised their war lodges in the midst of the white tents, and were eating a feast of coffee, sugar and bread. Their chiefs, Old Crow, Medicine Crow and Good Heart, were treated by General Crook to stewed dried apples.

The Shoshonis or Snakes arrived next. They were eighty-six, fully equipped; approached at headlong gallop in column of twos and wheeled left front into line like cavalry. Scout Tom Cosgrove and two other Texans were with them. Scout Cosgrove had been captain of Texas cavalry during the Civil War. He had drilled the Shoshonis. They bore two American flags, and every warrior fluttered a bright pennon. Their chiefs were Wesha and Nawkee, and two sons of Head Chief Washakie.

The Crows and the Shoshonis held grand council with the Gray Fox, and gave a war dance that lasted all night.

"The Sioux have trampled upon our hearts; we shall spit upon their scalps," Old Crow said.

The next day, June 15, the Gray Fox made preparations to march on and strike the enemy. The Crows had reported that the Sioux and Cheyennes were encamped "in numbers like the grass" in the valley of the Rosebud River, just to the west of the Tongue River, southern Montana. The Rosebud River was the Indians' Paradise.

The wagons and baggage were to be left here on

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Goose Creek, guarded by infantry under the quartermaster, Captain and Brevet Major John V. Furey. But one hundred and seventy-five infantrymen who said that they knew how to ride were mounted upon extra mules.

The Crows and Shoshonis also made preparations. They cleaned their guns and sharpened their lances and tomahawks; cut coup sticks—peeled willow branches twelve feet long, with which to touch the enemy. The first coup counted entitles the warrior to the scalp; and whatever ponies he touches are his.

June 16 the Gray Fox marched, with his mounted men, four days' rations in the saddle pockets, one hundred rounds of ammunition in the cartridge belts, one blanket behind each saddle, and a small pack train bossed by Tom Moore.

General Crook purposed to seize the Crazy Horse or Sitting Bull village, to outfit with the captured meat, and push on to join the General Terry and Colonel Gibbon columns.

The Crows and Shoshonis rode their best war ponies. Their medicine men chanted to them, telling them what demons the Sioux were and stirring them to deeds of valor.

This afternoon the advance scouts came tearing back. There were buffalo ahead, running away from a Sioux hunting party. The young warriors began to race about, in order to fill their ponies' lungs and give them their second wind, for battle.

Beyond the top of a grassy slope all the country be-

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fore was brown with buffalo, but no Sioux appeared. The soldiers were ordered not to shoot, for fear of alarming the enemy. The Crows and Shoshonis stripped and ran the buffalo, killing so many that the officers objected. But the red allies would not understand.

"Ugh! Better kill the buffalo than have him feed the Sioux."

The chase lasted the whole afternoon. Now there was little chance of surprising any Sioux within ten miles.

"Where you find buffalo, there you'll find Indians," was a plains maxim. This night Captain Sutorius, the Swiss commander of Troop E, Third Cavalry, who had been in the regiment twenty-two years, said to War Correspondent Finerty, as they lay side by side, each shivering under a single blanket:

"We'll have a fight tomorrow; mark my words. I feel it in the air."

The soldiers had to do without fires. The independent Crows and Shoshonis lighted large ones, cooked buffalo meat, and then howled their war songs.

General Crook wished that they had stayed home, but he could not say so, now. He asked them to scout ahead tonight, and find the Sioux. They said that they were too full of buffalo meat.

By daybreak the column was marching down the valley of the pretty Rosebud, in eastern south Montana. Goose Creek had been put forty miles behind. What awaited before? The Crows and Shoshonis were rather sober. Only a few of them would scout in the

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advance. They did not act at all anxious to find the terrible Sioux.

Hills rose on either side, with the Rosebud flowing northeast through the middle of the green valley. About eight o'clock halt was ordered, to wait for the scouts, in a basin edged by the hills and cliffs. The June sun was hot, here; on both banks of the river the horses and mules grazed; officers and men not on picket duty dozed.

Then at half-past eight firing was heard, down the valley.

"Those pesky Indians are shooting buffalo again!"

No! Here came the scouts, lashing their ponies and gazing behind. Two Crows arrived; one of them wounded.

"Sioux! Sioux! Heap Sioux!"

The other warriors were pouring in from the northern slopes. Behind them the hill tops were black with the enemy.

The Gray Fox had not been caught napping, in spite of the careless scouts. He was ready.

"Throw the infantry forward dismounted as skirmishers and hold those fellows in check," he shouted.

The infantry ran.

"Saddle up, there—saddle up, quick!" barked Captain Anson Mills, to the cavalry.

"How do you feel about this now, eh?" Captain Sutorius asked of Correspondent Finerty, with a grin. The enemy looked to be overwhelming in numbers.

"It's all right. It's the anniversary of Bunker Hill. A good luck day."

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"That's so. Never thought of it." And Captain Sutorius cried, to the troopers: "It's the anniversary of Bunker Hill, boys. We're in luck."

The troopers waved their carbine barrels.

Adjutant Henry Lemly galloped to the Third from General Crook.

"The commanding officer's compliments, Colonel Mills. Your battalion will charge those bluffs on the center."

Away went Troops A, E, I and M, Third Cavalry; through the river, through the bogs on the other side, across the level and up the bluffs in the north.

Captain Guy Henry's battalion, Troops B, D, F and L, charged on the left or west, to check the enemy's right. Troop C of Captain Frederick Van Vliet and Troop G of First Lieutenant Emmet Crawford sped to hold the bluffs in the rear and prevent a surround. The Second Cavalry was kept in reserve, until the battle should develop.

There was little fighting on the east, or right. Chief Crazy Horse had a host of warriors, both Sioux and Cheyennes, at his call. He had launched fifteen hundred, to draw the Gray Fox men on in detachments, and to wipe them out that way; or else to lure them all to the right by leaving it open.

Four miles beyond the camp the Rosebud entered a narrow canyon—the Dead Canyon of the Rosebud. The Sioux and Cheyenne village was at the lower end. If Crazy Horse might get the white soldiers into that canyon he would crush them as they hastened through to attack the village.

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General Crook rightly suspected that the village was located there. That was one reason why he had sent the Crows and Shoshonis forward. If they had scouted in earnest, he might have surprised the village—although after the buffalo hunt this was scarcely likely. The scouts had brought the enemy right to him. Now it was white general against red general, in pitched battle.

The Colonel Mills companies charged gallantly, using their revolvers and drove the Sioux and Cheyennes from the first crest; but another ridge appeared in front of them and there the same warriors were, again. They rode back and forth, making insulting gestures. One of the chiefs was signaling with a small looking-glass.

Troop I, of Captain William H. Andrews, was detached to the support of the left wing, where Captain Henry's battalion and Colonel Royall were being hard beset by the bold Cheyennes. The Colonel Mills men charged again; they cleared the second ridge—and were confronted by a third ridge, with the enemy capering and firing and hooting along it.

Hurrah! A shrill chorus sounded; through the intervals between the dismounted troopers the Crows and Shoshonis charged. They had been rallied—they were lashing to meet the hated Sioux.

Major George Randall and First Lieutenant John G. Bourke of General Crook's staff led the Crows, on the right. Orderly Sergeant John Van Moll, a giant of a man, dashed with them, on foot. Texan Tom Cosgrove, chief of Wind River scouts, led his Shoshonis,



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on the left. Bugler Elmer A. Snow of Troop M rode beside him.

Down from the second ridge they all rushed, Sergeant Van Moll running as swiftly as the ponies. Down from the third ridge the Sioux gladly rushed, to battle them. There was a great fight. The soldiers dared not fire, for fear of killing the friendlies. It was hard to tell one Indian from another. All were stripped to breech-clouts and moccasins, and wore streaming war bonnets.

The Crows fought from horseback—lying low and racing back and forth, shooting and whooping and counting coups. So did the Sioux. Half the Shoshonis fought on foot. For a time it was nip and tuck, while the white men looked on and cheered. But the Sioux increased. Reinforcements bolted in, hot for Crow and Snake scalps. At a signal whoop, the Crook scouts prepared to retire. They picked up their wounded and what dead they could, and carrying double their ponies darted up the slope, for the cavalry line.

Sergeant Van Moll failed to keep pace. He seemed to be left to the Sioux, run though he did. Major Randall and Lieutenant Bourke saw—they turned, to his rescue. But "Humpty," a little Crow warrior with a crooked back, was swifter. He swooped by them, reached Van Moll, clutched him by the shoulder and motioned to him to jump on behind. Holding fast, big Sergeant Van Moll rode into the line behind little Humpty, and the whole battalion shouted.

"There were no insects on them, either, when they

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passed us on the home stretch," wrote War Correspondent Finerty, who was there.

Now the Mills men mounted and made a counter charge; drove the enemy from the third ridge.

The Gray Fox was at the front, himself, directing the movements. He had grown impatient. His good black horse had been shot from under him. The Sioux and Cheyennes were standing up to him, and appeared to be more than two thousand. The fighting had lasted two hours and he had accomplished nothing, although the battle field extended over five miles. He determined to push matters to a finish. These northern Indians certainly were of different calibre from the Apaches.

He ordered the Mills battalion to fall back from the ridges and reform. That was done. Tom Moore's frontiersmen packers were thrown in, to cover the retirement. Every man was a crack shot, and as cool as a cucumber. On came the Sioux, to turn the flanks of the Mills troopers. At short range they were received with such a volley from the steady packers that "in not more than seven seconds," Lieutenant John Bourke wrote, "they concluded that home, sweet home was a better place."

On the west Major Royall's detachment of Captain Guy Henry's battalion and Captain Henry Noyes' Troop I, Second Cavalry, were being pressed stubbornly, in rough ground, by the fierce Cheyennes. General Crook sent Bugler Snow with orders to Major Royall to fall back, also.

The Sioux almost cut Bugler Snow off, as he gal-

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loped full tilt across the open valley. Hah! They nearly had him—no, he was out-pacing them, they dropped behind, they fired—with both arms broken he tumbled from his horse in the Major Royall lines. He delivered the orders.

Major Royall attempted to fall back. The Cheyennes took it for a retreat. They rushed him. The Sioux, checked in the pursuit of the Mills battalion, scoured over, to help. Captain Peter D. Vroom's Troop L delayed a little too long; was caught and separated from the battalion. The enemy surrounded it. Captain Henry led a charge into the furious mêlée, to rescue his comrades.

A heavy bullet struck him under the right eye, passed clear through his face, broke his nose and tore out under his left eye. It was a frightful wound. He reeled, spat blood in handfuls, but he stayed in the saddle and directed his soldiers; then he lurched to the ground.

The men gave way a little. The Cheyennes charged—a battle was waged right over his body, but fortunately he was not stepped on. A party of brave Shoshonis made a stand, to save him—the troopers charged again, and he was dragged from the danger. Hurrah!

The Captain Van Vliet battalion had arrived, to help Major Royall; the Tom Moore packers were protecting the right flank; dismounted infantry and Second Cavalry filled the gap between them and Major Royall.

Colonel Mills had fallen back, as ordered, into the basin—

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"It's time to stop this skirmishing, colonel," the Gray Fox said, galloping to him, behind the line of troopers lying flat and firing. "You must take your battalion and go for their village away down the canyon. I will follow and support you as soon as possible."

"All right, sir," Colonel Mills answered promptly. "Sound cease firing, bugler. Mount the men, Lemly."

In a minute Companies A, E and M, Third Cavalry, had wheeled to the right and at a trot were making for the northeast end of the valley, where the Dead Canyon opened. The five troops of the Second Cavalry, under Major Noyes, were to follow close.

The Sioux saw and yelled. Parties of them streamed around by the south and pelted to reach the canyon first.

The canyon proved to be a mean place, deep and narrow, the Rosebud boiling through and the steep rocky sides grown to evergreens. Captain Sutorius the Swiss and Lieutenant Adolphus Von Leutwitz cleaned the Sioux from the mouth with Troop E. The three companies, two hundred men, kept on.

In the fore there rode Aide-de-Camp Bourke, War Correspondent Finerty, and Lieutenant Frederick Schwatka who became a famous Arctic explorer. Frank Gruard guided.

The pony tracks were many, showing that this was a much used canyon. Colonel Mills waxed rather dubious. He had ten or twelve miles to go. Major Noyes' five companies arrived. The Indians had not attacked—it was a strange silence, but behind, in the

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west, the gunfire had swelled. The battle there had been renewed.

At seven miles there were signs of Indians watching him, before and from either side. The village must be almost in sight. So he halted his command at a wider place, where another canyon entered from the left, and he began to form for battle.

Somebody was coming, in the rear, at a gallop. It was an officer in buckskin, his long black beard grayed with dust: Captain Azor H. Nickerson of the Twenty-third Infantry and of General Crook's staff. He and an orderly had ridden the whole seven miles without escort. He saluted Colonel Mills, and spoke in a hurry.

"Mills, Royall is hard pressed and must be relieved. Henry is badly wounded and Vroom's troop is all cut up. The general orders that you and Noyes defile by your left flank out of this canyon and fall on the rear of the Indians who are pressing Royall. The general cannot move on to support you on account of the wounded."

This was true. The Gray Fox could spare only a small detail to guard his hospital and he dared not risk it. But well for Colonel Mills that he had been ordered out of the canyon; and well for General Crook that he had not moved in support. Chief Crazy Horse had arranged an ambush at the lower end. With plenty of warriors to use, he had stationed one reserve near an enormous dam of brush and logs that blocked the end; had made ready to close in behind the column with another force.

The Gray Fox had suspected. His heart had told

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him and he had recalled the Colonel Mills detachment for the two reasons.

The orders had arrived in good time and at a good place. The Mills and Noyes cavalry took the side canyon out, leading their horses and climbing by heads of companies, so as to operate quickly. They safely emerged upon a level plateau.

“Prepare to mount—mount!”

At a gallop they all spurred to the relief of Major Royall. The Sioux and Cheyenne boys were herding the warriors’ horses behind the red line; the Royall men, also fighting on foot, were getting surrounded. Scores of Indians were rushing to the field; soon there might be a grand charge, of five to one.

When the Indian lookouts saw the reinforcements tearing in, they whooped the alarm; the warriors ran, vaulted into the saddle, and fled before they were attacked in their rear. They left thirteen scalps for the Crows and Shoshonis.

Crazy Horse now withdrew to move his village. General Crook had fifty white and red soldiers killed and wounded; he was almost out of supplies, his men had fired twenty-five thousand cartridges, and his hospital had to be protected. To fight his way through all those Indians, and reach the General Terry column at the Yellowstone, one hundred miles, was impossible; to march around meant a detour of two hundred miles. Therefore he decided to withdraw, also.

The time was two o’clock in the afternoon.

The plucky Captain Henry had been taken to the rear. He lay upon the hard ground; one eye had been

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destroyed, in fact he could not see at all; a bloody rag covered his face, and the flies buzzed hungrily. An orderly held a horse so that the shadow fell upon him.

"Fix me up so that I can go back, can't you?" Captain Henry had mumbled, to the surgeon.

War Correspondent Finerty bent over him.

"That's too bad, captain. Can I do anything for you?"

"It's nothing, Jack. For this we are soldiers. By the way, I hear that you've been in the thick of the firing today, and done well. I'd advise you to join the army. You ought to try for a commission."

"Join the army!" Looking at Captain Henry, Reporter Finerty did not feel very enthusiastic.

Now there was a terrible journey in store for the wounded, and especially for Captain Henry.

First, to Goose Creek, fifty miles. The wounded were carried in travois, or litters of a blanket slung between two poles and dragged each behind a mule.

General Crook tried to pick the smoothest road, but the best proved bad enough. Captain Henry's litter was supported by a mule at either end. He suffered frightfully; he could swallow only broth; the mules objected to the smell of blood and the looks of their burden; the rear mule bit Captain Henry in the head—they turned the captain about and the front mule threatened to kick him. Once the lead mule stumbled and pitched him out. But he never uttered one word of complaint. Yet he was not a strong man, in body; he was slightly built.

From Goose Creek the wounded had to be sent in

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wagons, to Fort Fetterman, one hundred and fifty miles south. Lying upon grass, they were jolted over hills and ridges, into gulches and out, and across creeks.

Captain Henry should have been dead, before this, the surgeons said; but he was resolved not to die. He had set his mind upon seeing his wife. She was at Fort D. A. Russell, near Cheyenne of Wyoming. She could not come to him—the Sioux and Cheyennes held the trails; she could not get quick word of him, for the Indians had cut the telegraph wires. The captain knew that she would be anxious. He was going on to her.

So they took him across country again, in an army ambulance, one hundred more miles to Medicine Bow station on the Union Pacific Railroad. From there he rode one hundred miles by train, to Cheyenne.

He had been traveling over two weeks. At the end of all, he insisted upon walking from the carriage to the doorway of his quarters in Fort Russell—but he had to be led.

Then at the doorway, when his wife grasped him by the hand, he said, only:

“Well, this is a great way to celebrate the Fourth of July.”

What she said, she didn't really quite know; but it wasn't very much, for he was a soldier and she was a soldier's wife.

Captain Guy Vernor Henry did not die. His sheer grit pulled him through. He was *bound* to live. He already had four brevets, and the Medal of Honor was coming to him. His gallantry on the Rosebud



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brought him another brevet—that of brigadier general. In a year he joined his regiment; one eye was sightless, his face was scarred, his body somewhat weak; but his nerve all was there. He went into the field against the Sioux; lasted only six weeks, was carried home—and tried again.

In 1890, when the Sioux ghost-danced, as major of the Ninth cavalry he led it one hundred and ten miles in a day and a half, was in the saddle twenty-two hours, and fought two battles; all in zero weather.

Captain Henry died, major-general of Volunteers and brigadier general of Regulars, October 27, 1899, in the service, in Porto Rico where the Spanish-American War had landed him. He had ridden, fought and worked for his country through twenty-three years after he might with good reason have retired. But to him the Indian bullet was nothing; the business of being a good soldier was everything.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE YELLOW HAIR'S LAST FIGHT (1876)

#### THE SEVENTH CAVALRY ON THE LITTLE BIG HORN

**I**N the battle of the Rosebud, June 17, 1876, the Gray Fox men had been held by the Crazy Horse men. But it was not a drawn battle. General Crook had lost.

He had set out to capture the Sioux and Cheyenne village, and to march on. The Sioux and Cheyennes had saved their village, and he was unable to march on. He had to fall back, and wait.

This was a great pity, because on June 17 he was almost in touch with the Seventh Cavalry of General Terry's column. If he had broken through Crazy Horse he might have joined General Custer in three days, for he was heading exactly right. Or even if he had not joined, the Sitting Bull village would have been alarmed by the closing-in movements and would have kept moving.

Then there would have been a different story to tell, of June 25 on the Little Big Horn River, only thirty miles northwest of the Rosebud battle field.

The General Terry column had marched out of Fort Abraham Lincoln, across the Missouri River from Bismarck, North Dakota, on May 17. It numbered one

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thousand men. These were the entire fighting Seventh Cavalry—twelve companies, of twenty-eight officers and six hundred troopers, under Lieutenant-Colonel George A. Custer the Yellow Hair; two companies of the Sixth Infantry and one of the Seventeenth Infantry; a platoon of the Twentieth Infantry to serve three gatling guns; forty-five Arikara Indian scouts led by Chief Bloody Knife; and one hundred and seventy-nine teamsters and packers to handle the wagons and pack mules.

On June 21 this "Dakota" column was camped beside the Yellowstone River in Montana, at the mouth of the Rosebud River. That was the same Rosebud upon the headwaters of which, ninety or one hundred miles southward, General Crook had had his fight, four days before.

But General Terry did not know of this. He did not know where the Gray Fox was, and the Gray Fox did not know where he was. The country between them was red.

The Yellowstone River cuts southeastern Montana almost into a corner triangle. The Sitting Bull camp was pretty well known to be in that corner.

Colonel Gibbon had arrived down the Yellowstone from the west. His column was encamped across the Yellowstone, opposite the mouth of the Rosebud. The Gray Fox was supposed to be coming on from the south and driving Crazy Horse before him.

But Major Marcus Reno had taken six troops of the Seventh Cavalry and scouted south. On June 17 he had been only forty miles northeast of the very place



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where General Crook was then fighting Crazy Horse; of course he had heard no sounds.

On his return he reported that he had struck an Indian trail nine or ten days old, pointing southwest up the Rosebud; a large trail, of three hundred and eighty lodges, meaning perhaps fifteen hundred people.

This night of June 21 a council was held by General Terry, Colonel Gibbon and Lieutenant-Colonel Custer aboard the steamboat *Far West*, which had brought supplies up the Missouri and the Yellowstone. The Indians had not crossed the Yellowstone; that had been made certain by the marches of the two columns, from east and west. They were still in the south. General Terry believed that the trail found by Major Reno was bound for a rendezvous in the country of the Little Big Horn River—the next stream west of the Rosebud.

General Alfred Howe Terry was a Yale man and lawyer who had entered the Civil War with the Connecticut Volunteers; had been appointed brigadier general of Regulars and brevetted major-general of Volunteers for gallantry in the storming of Fort Fisher, January, 1865.

He was a kindly looking man, with a long beard and a limp; was not yet counted an Indian fighter, but was a trustworthy, cautious soldier. Because of his limp, the Indians scouts called him No-hip-bone. He may not have fought Indians; nevertheless he shrewdly guessed what Indians were likely to do. He had his maps.

The Little Big Horn River flows northwest into the

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“big” Big Horn River, and that flows north into the Yellowstone about one hundred and ten miles on up from the mouth of the Rosebud.

Now General Custer was directed to take his Seventh Cavalry and scout south and examine the Indian trail. The General Terry infantry and the Colonel Gibbon infantry and cavalry were to go on up the Yellowstone to the mouth of the Big Horn; then they should march south up the Big Horn, to the Little Big Horn.

“It is, of course, impossible to give you any definite instructions in regard to your movement,” said the written orders issued, June 22, to General Custer; “and the Department Commander places too much confidence in your zeal, energy and ability to wish to impose upon you precise orders which might hamper your action when nearly in contact with the enemy. He will, however, indicate to you his own views of what your action should be, and he desires that you should conform to them, unless you should see sufficient reasons for departing from them.”

General Terry, the commanding officer, thought that Lieutenant-Colonel Custer should follow the Indian trail until he found out its final direction. If it led west from the Rosebud, toward the Little Big Horn, he should leave it and should still scout south, perhaps into Wyoming, swinging widely in an arc to make sure that the Indians were not escaping around his left flank. He was to turn into the northwest, and complete the half circle by marching toward the other column, in the Big Horn and Little Big Horn country.

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He was to report to General Terry, there, within fifteen days.

From his march Lieutenant-Colonel Custer was to send a courier to Colonel Gibbon. And it was hoped that Sitting Bull might be caught between the two columns.

General Terry was very anxious that the movement should be successful. The gallant Seventh, of the twelve companies averaging fifty men to a company, passed in review before General Terry and Colonel Gibbon, at noon of Thursday, June 22. Then they all, except the band, cantered on, up the Rosebud.

"Now, Custer, don't be greedy, but wait for us," Colonel Gibbon called. For he, too, was anxious. He knew the dashing Custer.

"No, I will not," Old Curly retorted, with wave of his hand as he galloped after his column. He would not—what?

The Arikara scouts went with the Seventh. Their chiefs were Bloody Knife, Stab, and the medicine-man Bob-tail-bull. General No-hip-bone sent six Crow scouts, also, as guides into this country that once had been Crow country. They were White-man-runs-him, Goes-ahead, Hairy Moccasin, White Swan, Curly, and Paints-his-face-yellow. And there was a black squawman—old Isaiah, who spoke the Sioux tongue.

Quiet, blue-eyed "Lonesome" Charley Reynolds, of Fort Lincoln, was chief white scout. Mark Kellogg of Bismarck was war correspondent for the *New York Herald*. Scout George Herendeen from Colonel Gibbon's column was attached, to carry dispatches.



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Boston Custer, General Custer's younger brother, had come out from the East for his health. He was forage master. School-boy Armstrong, or "Autie," Reed, the general's nephew, had "joined" the Seventh at Fort Lincoln, as cattle driver, to spend his vacation "fighting Indians."

The Seventh traveled light. That was the Custer way. It took only a small pack train bearing extra ammunition and rations for fifteen days. The band was left at the Yellowstone; the men had left their sabers at Fort Lincoln.

General Terry had offered General Custer four troops of Colonel Gibbon's Second Cavalry and two of the gatling guns; had proposed going, himself. But General Custer wished no aid. He had all the confidence in the world in his Seventh—his own regiment.

Tom Custer, his brother, was a captain in it; had entered the army at sixteen years of age and possessed two medals for having captured enemy flags. First Lieutenant James Calhoun, commanding Troop L, was his brother-in-law; had married his sister Maggie. And here were Boston Custer; and Autie Reed who was his sister Lydia's boy and had been named for him. Truly, on this march the Seventh United States Cavalry was a Custer regiment.

"Old Curly" wore his buckskin suit and crimson silk handkerchief, but his yellow hair had been cut while he was in the East and was not yet so long as usual. The six Crows eyed him well. They saw that he was tall, slim, erect and broad-shouldered. He looked and talked straight. They said to one another:

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## YELLOW HAIR'S LAST FIGHT (1876)

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"There is a brave, kind and thinking man. There is a good general."

On June 23 the Seventh struck the trail that had been found by Major Reno. It led up the Rosebud and was a plain trail indeed, of lodge-pole and pony tracks. The Arikaras and Crows thought that one thousand or twelve hundred Sioux had passed over it. But nobody here knew that these were Indians running away from the Dakota agencies, to join Sitting Bull.

General Custer made long marches. At seventy miles from the mouth of the Rosebud, on Saturday, June 24, the trail turned into the west, toward the Little Big Horn, just as General Terry had expected.

What a big trail it was! It had increased. The ground was beaten to dust by the many hoofs; the camps had contained not only lodges but also little bush wickiups, like dog houses or children's houses. These puzzled the soldiers. They really had been the "pup" lodges of single warriors, and not play lodges. Parties of Chief Crazy Horse's warriors had followed this same trail, after the battle of the Rosebud.

The great trail led for the divide (the Wolf Mountains) between the valley of the Rosebud and the valley of the Little Big Horn. An Indian village certainly lay over there. General Custer decided to make a night march and surprise the village.

Therefore he did not swing south, as directed. He did not send Scout Herendeen through with word for Colonel Gibbon. Even though there were twelve hundred Sioux ahead of him, he believed that by a quick attack he could crush them. He had done the same

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at the Washita, with Black Kettle's village. The Sioux of Sitting Bull should not escape, either.

At eleven o'clock tonight the soldiers were aroused by the "silent reveille," which means a nudge and a low command by the non-commissioned officers. They took the westward leading trail, hoping to cross the divide rapidly and strike the village at daybreak, as on the Washita. But after they had marched hard, up hill, by the route of a winding stream, at two in the morning "Lonesome" Charley Reynolds said that it was no use to try farther; the night was so dark and the way so long and bad that they all must wait for daylight.

They halted for three hours. General Custer was disappointed. He changed his plan. The column should advance as far as possible without being seen; and then camp, and attack tomorrow morning.

So at dawn, this Sunday morning, June 25 (and a beautiful Sunday morning), they marched on. At ten o'clock they were near the top of the divide. The Crow and Arikara scouts, who had been reconnoitering before, under First Lieutenant Charley Varnum, reported that from a high point called the Crows' Nest they had seen much smoke and "heaps ponies" fifteen miles on, where the Little Big Horn flowed crookedly northwest through its valley. Bodies on Sioux scaffolding along the trail had been passed and the scalps and beards of white men, hung up.

"The Long Hair will find Sioux enough to keep us all fighting two or three days," said Chief Bloody Knife.

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## YELLOW HAIR'S LAST FIGHT (1876)

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"Oh, tell him I guess we'll get through with them in one day," General Custer laughed.

It was necessary to move with care. About the middle of the morning the column halted again in a hot little ravine on the southwest slope of the Wolf or Rosebud Mountains. A ridge of hills hid the valley of the Little Big Horn. Bad news was now received.

A box of hard-tack had been dropped from a pack mule. A detail had been sent back to get it, and had discovered an Indian trying to open it with his hatchet. The Indian had fled, but had stopped to reconnoiter and probably had seen the whole column!

The village would be told that the soldiers were coming. There was no hope of surprising the enemy. If the column waited until morning, the village likely enough would have broken up and gone.

The Arikaras were being rubbed with sacred oil by Bob-tail-bull, to make them proof against the weapons of the Sioux. Above the ridge there floated a film of blue smoke and yellow dust. The Sioux village was under the smoke, the Sioux pony herds were under the dust.

The smoke and the dust were about five miles away. General Custer rode back to the column, from a scout in the advance to get the lay of the land. Like Old Zach before the battle of Resaca de la Palma he had the choice of several plans.

He could wait and see what the enemy did; if the enemy retired he could follow and send a courier to General Terry and Colonel Gibbon. But the Terry and Gibbon column was many miles distant, the Indians

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would travel fast, and the Seventh would have to fight them to stop them.

Or he could stay and risk being attacked; but he was outnumbered—might be surrounded and cut off.

Or he could attack. That he decided to do: to attack at once before more spies surveyed him. The motto of the cavalry is "Audacity"; thunderbolt attack is the cavalry weapon.

"You will find more Sioux in that valley than you can handle," Mitch Bouyer, the Crow interpreter, said.

"If Mitch Bouyer is afraid, he can stay behind," Old Curly replied.

"I'll go wherever the Yellow Hair goes; but if we go into that valley we won't come out of it alive," said Mitch Bouyer.

The column was divided. General Custer proposed to charge the village from several sides, just as on the Washita. That had always been his favorite method of attack. He had used it in the Civil War, with success: a charge by three or four detachments, at one time. This confused the enemy.

Major Marcus A. Reno was given the command of Troops A, G and M. Captain and Brevet Colonel Frederick William Benteen (who had won brevets in the Civil War and upon the Kansas plains, both) was given the command of Troops H, D and K. Captain Thomas M. McDougall with Company B was placed in charge of the pack train detail.

General Custer himself took Troop C, Captain Tom Custer; Troop E, the gray-horse troop of First Lieutenant and Brevet Captain Algernon E. Smith,

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who had been crippled in one arm while carrying the flag at the storming of Fort Fisher; Troop F, the "band-box" troop of the dandy Captain George W. Yates, which boasted that every man who had died in it had died fighting; Troop I, of Captain and Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel Myles W. Keogh, who was the oldest of the company officers and had fought under the Pope in Italy and under General Stoneman in the Civil War; and Troop L, of First Lieutenant James Calhoun, who had married Maggie Custer and was the handsomest man in the regiment.

The three battalions formed. Under the warm sun of a cloudless June sky they advanced for the broken valley of the Little Big Horn. And fifty miles in the northwest the General Terry and Colonel Gibbon column was coming up the Big Horn, toward them.

Captain Benteen swung to the left, in toward the river, "to sweep everything before him" and drive the Sioux into the net. Major Reno's battalion occupied the Indian trail. Captain McDougall's pack mules followed. General Custer's battalion held to the right.

The trail skirted the ridge before; so did Major Reno and General Custer. Captain Benteen veered more southward, to round the point of the ridge, where it met the river.

A creek flowed down the ridge, to the Little Big Horn. The Major Reno battalion took the left side, the General Custer battalion paralleled, a little way at the rear, on the right side. The sun was high, and approaching noon. Captain Benteen had disappeared,

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in the draws. Nothing was heard from him, and nothing from the Sioux.

The Arikaras and Crows were spread out in the advance, scouting. They halted—they had found a small camp and had driven some Sioux out. There was one lodge with a dead Sioux in it. He was a Crazy Horse warrior who had been wounded by the Crow and Shoshoni scouts at the battle of the Rosebud, and had died here.

General Custer beckoned to Major Reno to come over, and he did. Pretty soon Adjutant William Cooke—"Queen's Own" Cooke, who had been born in Canada and wore Dundreary side-whiskers of a wonderful black—bore orders to Major Reno.

"The general commanding thinks that the village is not more than two miles before, and evidently the Indians are running away. He directs that you move forward at as rapid gait as you think prudent, and to charge afterward, and the whole outfit will support you."

Now General Custer and his five troops changed their course slightly and headed more to the right, or north. They kept to the high ground of the bluffs bordering the valley. They were making for the lower or north-west end of the village. White-man-runs-him, Hairy Moccasin, Goes-ahead and Curly went with them, to guide them.

"You come and show me where I can make a success," the Long Hair had said to them.

Hairy Moccasin led. It was he who, at dawn this morning, while the other scouts slept, had discovered

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## YELLOW HAIR'S LAST FIGHT (1876)

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the enemy's village, from the high place of the Wolf Mountains divide called the Crow's Nest.

Major Reno was to charge the upper or nearer end of the village. Captain Benteen was to attack the rear, or west.

Major Reno ordered "Trot!" In column of fours he followed the trail down the creek, to its mouth. Paints-his-face-yellow and White Swan rode with him. He glimpsed lodges, below him, across the river. He forded the little Big Horn, and deployed his column into line, so that it reached from the river to the southern bluffs. The valley narrowed, here. He put the Arikara scouts upon his left flank. His one hundred and twenty men were ready.

Then he sent word to General Custer.

"I am at the river, and have everything in front of me; and they are strong."

But the Sitting Bull village was not "running away." Not much! To be sure, the women were packing lodge things, in case that the battle should go against the Sioux; but the pony herds had not been brought in and no teepees had been lowered.

It was a hunting camp, and the largest camp in many years. Here upon the Greasy Grass (which was the Indian name for the Little Big Horn) fifteen thousand Sioux and Cheyennes, with a few Northern Arapahos, had gathered.

The fifteen thousand people were camped for three miles up and down the Greasy Grass. Chief Crazy Horse and his hands had arrived from the head of the Rosebud, where he had defeated General Crook last



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week, only one day's march in the southeast. Large parties had come in from the reservations. A count at the agencies would have shown that not half the Indians were there who should have been there.

Chief Gall of the Hunkpapas was principal war chief; Crow King, another Hunkpapa, was his second. Lame Deer led the Miniconjous; his second was Hump. Big Road led the Oglalas; He Dog was his second. They all were great chiefs. Two Moon was second to Crazy Horse, in the Cheyennes. Black-moccasin Sioux, Brulés or Burnt Thigh Sioux of Red Cloud's bands, and Sans Arcs or Without-bows, also were here. And Rain-in-the-face, who had been imprisoned by Captain Tom Custer at Fort Lincoln and had sworn to eat his heart, had his own band of young Oglalas.

Sitting Bull the Hunkpapa made medicine for the whole camp, and accepted presents.<sup>1</sup>

The lodges all were on the left or southern side of the Greasy Grass. The Black-moccasin camp was at the up-river end; the Hunkpapa camp was next; next were the Miniconjous; next, the Oglalas, with the Brulés back a little distance; next, the Sans Arcs; and at the lower end, the Cheyennes.

The village had been living in the old free way. It was the first time in a long, long period that so many Sioux had been able to enjoy themselves. Every night there had been dancing and feasting. Chief Crazy Horse's men had whipped the soldiers. That was another celebration.

<sup>1</sup> For Sitting Bull's part in the battle see "Boys' Book of Indian Warriors."

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## YELLOW HAIR'S LAST FIGHT (1876)

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The village had been ordered by the chiefs to move northward, this very morning. But word had come that the pony soldiers were approaching. That was unexpected. The chiefs decided not to run; they had three thousand warriors, plenty of guns and ammunition and meat, and were not afraid of the soldiers. The women were told to go on packing up. If the soldiers attacked, all right; if the soldiers passed by, all right.

Pretty soon the pony soldiers were to be seen, winding along the bluffs in the northeast, six or eight miles out. This was the General Custer column.

A piece of thick woods stood at the upper end of the village, and cut off the view there, where the river curved. While the Sioux and Cheyennes were watching the pony soldiers filing along the hills, and waiting to see what they would do, a sudden volley of bullets rattled through the lodges of the Black-moccasin camp and the Hunkpapa camp. Soldiers cheered. Major Reno had attacked.

That was a surprise. It is said that General Custer had purposely showed his column on the march to the lower end of the village, so as to draw attention from the Major Reno column. He had succeeded. But Chief Gall said that as quickly as the bullets rattled he knew everything, and understood. He had hopes of victory, for the first soldiers had struck too soon. He rallied the Miniconjous and the Oglalas to the relief of the Black-moccasins and the Hunkpapas. They rode to meet the soldiers.

Major Reno did not strike hard enough. He had

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advanced at a trot down the valley, driving about one hundred Indians before him, into the village. But before he had reached the village, here came the Chief *Lame Deer* men and the Chief *Big Road* men, and the Chief *Crow King* men, and all, urged on by the fiery Chief *Gall*: six hundred of them, whooping, lashing, careering and spreading ever wider to envelop both flanks of the thin blue line.

They gladly charged the *Arikaras*, their red enemies; and the *Arikaras*, except brave *Bloody Knife*, *Stab* and *Bob-tail-bull*, fled so wildly that they did not stop until they were at the *Yellowstone River*, one hundred miles.

That exposed Major *Reno's* left. The *Sioux* passed around. More Indians were arriving every minute. He was confronted by a swarm; the enemy was getting around his flanks and in his rear. The lodges were still standing defiantly. He feared, he said, a trap; if he advanced he would be engulfed. He did not see General *Custer*, nor Captain *Benteen*. He and his one hundred and twenty were alone.

"Battalion—halt! Prepare to fight on foot—dismount!"

The Indians have said that if Major *Reno* had charged straight on, regardless, they would have broken; they would have suspected a trap, themselves, not knowing but that another column was charging from another direction. The warriors would have galloped to save their families.

But the soldiers threw themselves from their horses; the horses were led into the timber at the right—the

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## YELLOW HAIR'S LAST FIGHT (1876)

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timber that veiled the course of the river above the Black-moccasin and Hunkpapa camps.

The soldiers fought lying down in the shelter of the timber. The Indians pressed nearer and nearer. They had no need to save their village. Word came to Major Reno that the enemy was killing the horses, in the timber.

That would not do. He still saw no support coming. Where were Custer and Benteen? The timber, surrounded by the howling warriors, five to one, ten to one ("The very earth seemed to grow Indians," he afterward reported), was no place for him, he judged. So he gave the order to retire to the high ground on the other side of the river.

This was Major Reno's first Indian fight. He had graduated from West Point, and entered the army in 1857; had won brevet of lieutenant-colonel in the Civil War, and had been assigned to the Seventh Cavalry in 1869. But he had seen little service in Indian country.

From attack he had changed to defense. Now he let himself be driven back. That upset the whole plan of battle. If he could have held fast, in the timber, with the river curve protecting his flanks, Custer or Benteen would have supported him by attacking and dividing the enemy.

His men ran to their horses and fell back, for the ford. They missed the ford, and had to take merely a pony trail that plunged from the bank into the water and climbed out into a cut or narrow draw on the opposite side.

In crossing the river and fighting a rear guard action

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many brave deeds were done. Second Lieutenant Bennie Hodgson was wounded twice, and then killed while dismounted and facing backward, revolver in hand. Doctor J. M. DeWolf, the assistant surgeon, was shot dead while fighting like the troopers. First Lieutenant Donald McIntosh delayed to rally the stragglers, and was killed.

Altogether, before the Reno soldiers gained the high ground of the north side of the river, three officers and twenty-nine men had fallen, and seven had been wounded, out of the one hundred and twenty.

Bloody Knife and Stab and Bob-tail-bull were dead. So was black Isaiah the squawman; so was "Lonesome" Charley Reynolds, the white scout. First Lieutenant Charles de Rudio the Italian, Scout Herendeen and fourteen men had been cut off and were still in the timber.

White Swan and Paints-his-face-yellow saved themselves. That had been the arrangement. The Crows were to guide the Long Hair to the Sioux, but they were not to stay and fight.

The fighting at the timber had lasted only thirty minutes. The retreat had taken about as long. When the Reno remnant had scrambled from the water and up out of the ravine, to the top of a bare hill, the time was almost two o'clock. Now where were Custer and Benteen?

But Captain Benteen and his three companies were coming. They had been entangled in the hot hills and ravines up-river, on this side, and had seen no Indians. Bugler Martini had met Captain Benteen with a pen-

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ciled message from Colonel Cooke, General Custer's adjutant.

"Benteen: Come on. Big village. Be quick. Bring packs." And—"P. S.: Bring packs."

Old Curly had need of the extra ammunition. Captain Benteen led his companies as fast as he could down the valley, inclining to the right so as to join the Custer column. The pack train toiled after. Mules and horses were tired and thirsty. Presently he heard firing. He saw smoke and dust—saw a skirmish line of blue-coats fighting off a horde of Indians, saw the main body climbing the bluff, saw that somebody had been defeated; and saving his horses he advanced at a trot. He was a cool man, and had faced Indians many a time. Keeping to the high ground he joined Major Reno.

The Indians were leaving; were scurrying down river, as if in a hurry. It seemed as though another fight was in progress. Yes—shots were sounding, two or three miles away in the northwest. They were carbine shots, and the cracks of the Indians' Winchesters.

Custer was engaged. The last seen of Custer was at the moment when Major Reno had reached the ford, to attack the village. The Custer column was winding on, along the high bluffs; Old Curly had waved his hat, as if to encourage.

There he had said, according to Bugler Martini:

"A big one!" It was the village, down below. "Good! We've caught them asleep, boys! Now for a charge!"

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And he had sent Martini back with the note ordering up the ammunition and reinforcements.

The firing down the valley rose louder. The pack train and Company B under Captain McDougall toiled in, to the hill. The Indians were sniping and threatening, but did not attack. Major Reno's officers were pleading with him to try for communication with General Custer. What was the best thing to do? Captain Thomas B. Weir and First Lieutenant Winfield Scott Edgerly took Troop D and started; they made way clear to the Custer trail on the bluff; there the Indians stopped them. Major Reno had followed, but could not keep on. They all were turned back to the hill that they had left.

Only four miles lay between them and General Custer. A squadron could have covered it in twenty minutes at a gallop; the pack train and ammunition might have been sent through in half an hour. But Major Reno did not risk, with his seven companies—thirteen officers and three hundred and eighty men. The country was rough and broken; he did not know what lay ahead; all he knew was that Captain Weir had sighted a great commotion of dust and smoke over there—that there appeared to be thousands of Indians, and that a number of the men were without horses. He stayed on his hill, thinking himself surrounded.

Chief Gall had proved good generalship. In crossing the river below Major Reno's column of retreat, to cut it off, he had learned that the General Custer column was galloping in. The Reno men had been whipped. Very well. He left only a sprinkling of

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## YELLOW HAIR'S LAST FIGHT (1876)

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warriors to hold Major Reno. With the others he sped for the new attack. So few were the warriors now here, that three hours after the Major Reno retreat Scout Herendeen and thirteen of the lost men stole right through the Indian line and reached the hill. Lieutenant de Rudio and another man joined, the second night.

The Reno force had heard the firing recede; then there had been two volleys, of carbines, like a signal. The firing soon died away. Then it welled again, scattering; then it ceased. The battle was over. Had Custer been beaten off?

Yes. The Indians were coming back in droves. The Reno men dug rifle pits and piled up breast-works. They began to suffer for water. Bullets poured in upon them.

"I think we were fighting all the Sioux nation, and also all the desperadoes, renegades, half-breeds and squawmen between the Missouri River and the Arkansas," Major Reno said.

The hot siege by bullet and arrow lasted from six o'clock in the evening until half-past nine o'clock at night. Eighteen men were killed, forty-eight wounded. Major Reno could not possibly move, now.

But where was Custer? Only the Indians knew. The Sioux and Cheyennes knew; so did Curly, the Crow scout. He and Goes-ahead, Hairy Moccasin and White-man-runs-him had gone into battle, until the Long Hair had ordered:

"You go and save your lives. I will stay with my boys."



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Curly had lingered last of all. Then he had let his bushed hair down into two Sioux braids, had taken a Sioux blanket, and jumping upon a Sioux horse had mingled with the enemy until he was free. He looked back and saw the General Custer group wedged tightly in the midst of the enemy. He rode to carry the word to No-hip-bone.

General Custer had had ten miles to march, while Major Reno had had only three or four. It was about half past two o'clock when the five Custer troops descended toward the river. They were late. Major Reno already had been driven to his hill. General Custer must have heard the firing—he may have thought that Major Reno was charging through, from the upper end of the village. So he launched his column for the lower half of the village. Troop L led. They had not seen all the village, and they were striking it at the middle.

Chief Gall had been given plenty of time. When the Long Hair came down from the ridge, the Gall men had sent up the ravines, to take position and waylay him. Major Reno had been defeated; they feared only this one column, now.

When the head of the Long Hair column approached the river, the Indians rose all around, in the path and on either side. The gray-horse troop dismounted first; the other companies dismounted, to fight on foot. One might think that the Long Hair was astounded by the great odds—had decided to hold his ground until the Major Reno or the Captain Benteen charge pushed through.

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## YELLOW HAIR'S LAST FIGHT (1876)

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At any rate, he never reached the river. The Crazy Horse Cheyennes, who had been gathered to save their camp at this end, pressed hard; the Oglalas and Hunkpapas and Miniconjous pressed hard. There was no letup in the whooping and circling and rain of bullets; and within just a few minutes the Long Hair ordered a retirement to higher ground.

The soldiers did not run. One company, dismounted, covered the falling-back movement; the other companies retreated in regular formation, obeying their officers. Some of the men were afoot and some were on horses. Many horses were captured.

This company that stayed all died. It was Troop L, of Lieutenant Calhoun, General Custer's brother-in-law, and Second Lieutenant John Jordan Crittenden, a young Kentuckian who had joined the Seventh from the Twentieth Infantry platoon. After the battle they all were found—every man in line and the two officers at the posts, behind.

The Long Hair was retiring to a detached ridge in the northwest. Chief Gall guessed. He hastened warriors, to out-foot the column; and when the soldiers arrived, there the Cheyennes and Sioux were, surrounding them.

This was a mile from the place where the first brave company had fallen. The soldiers were on foot; almost all the horses left had been put behind the ridge, but the gray-horse men kept theirs. The squaws and warriors circled behind the ridge and stampeded or shot those other horses. Then they knew that the soldiers could not get away, and this made the warriors

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## BOYS' BOOK OF BORDER BATTLES

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bold. It was only a matter of shooting and killing.

Besides, the white soldiers were having trouble with their guns. The shells stuck and the guns would not work. So the Indians fought without fear.

The company on the left of the Long Hair's line died. It was old Captain Keogh's company, and warded off the charges until nobody remained there, to protect that flank.

Band-box Troop F of Captain Yates, and Troop C of Captain Tom Custer were in the center. The gray-horse troop of Lieutenant Smith, the Hero of Fort Fisher, stood longest, on the right. The men shot their horses for barricades.

In a very short time, maybe less than an hour, not many of the white soldiers were left. Then Chief Gall gave a great whoop, from all sides the warriors charged—they rode over the ridge. Twenty-six of the soldiers on horses tried to escape from the right, to the trees of the river, but they were caught, and cut off. A man had tried to ride for the hills, as if he were taking a message. He, too, was caught.

Not a white soldier lived. The Sioux and Cheyennes searched for the Long Hair, but his hair was not long and they did not know him, among the slain.

Then they rode back to the village, and said to the women:

"Leave your lodges up. We have killed them all."

After they had rested they went to kill the Reno men, on the other hill; but they decided not to charge. They would keep the soldiers there until thirst had made them crazy.

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## YELLOW HAIR'S LAST FIGHT (1876)

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This night the Sitting Bull village celebrated, with bonfires and scalp dances. The Major Reno men saw the glow, and heard the horrid noises. Where was Custer?

At two o'clock in the morning the hill was attacked. From that hour until two in the afternoon there was hot fighting. The Indian rifles out-ranged the cavalry carbines, but volunteers got to the river and back with water, just the same. In some of the charges the Indians dashed so near that they used their coup sticks; they were always stopped.

At two o'clock in the afternoon the Indians in the valley raised a great smoke. They had set fire to the grass—as the smoke blew aside they could be seen leveling the lodges. But that was squaw work; the warriors would still fight. Then, at sunset, a fresh smoke welled; Indians were fanning the fire with blankets; and then—Hurrah!—a long column of men and women, mounted and afoot, marched out ahead of the smoke, for the northwest. The siege had been lifted.

Tonight, June 26, Major Reno moved his command, with its dead and wounded (seventy in all) nearer the river, to wait for General Custer and the Terry-Gibbon column. He supposed that General Custer had been thrown back, and had met General Terry. It was scarcely possible that five companies of the Seventh Cavalry could have been completely wiped from existence.

After breakfast the next morning, June 27, another dust cloud was seen, approaching from down the val-

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ley. That was either Custer, or the Indians again. Major Reno formed for defense and sent scouts out to spy upon the column.

"Look for Custer!" was the cry. "Look for the gray-horse troop. That will show. It must be Custer. The Gibbon column would not get here so quickly."

When the volunteer scouts came back, they brought with them another scout, who had a dispatch from General Terry addressed to General Custer himself.

"General: A Crow scout has just come into camp, saying you've been whipped. I don't believe it, but I'm coming with medical aid."

Custer had not joined General Terry; he was not here. Where was he? A chill fell upon the Reno men.

The Terry and Gibbon infantry and cavalry marched in. No, they had not seen General Custer—knew nothing of him, except by the report of the Crow, Curly; but only a few miles back, on their way they had passed a ridge, to their left, which seemed to be white with bodies, like a battle field.

Captain Benteen was immediately detailed, with a party, to examine closer. He reported; and everybody had to believe, at last.

Two hundred and twelve was the count, upon Custer Field. Several officers and a few men were missing; they had been killed after a chase, when cut off. But General Custer was here; and Tom Custer of the two medals, and old Captain Keogh, and "Bandbox" Captain Yates, and Captain Algernon Smith the Hero of Fort Fisher, and the rest, including Boston Custer and

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## YELLOW HAIR'S LAST FIGHT (1876)

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young Autie Reed and Mark Kellogg the newspaper man, were here.

The Sioux and Cheyennes said that if Major Reno had charged on into the village, or had fought at the timber until Custer came, they would have run. Some of them said that if Custer had charged quicker, they would have run. Or if he had not divided his regiment. They thought that Major Reno's battalion was far too small.

"In all the history of my great-grandfather I have never known of such an attack in daylight," Chief Runs-the-enemy, of the Sioux, declared. But General Custer had not foreseen that his orders would fail, and that Major Reno and Captain Benteen would nowhere meet him.

And they all said, through many years:

"We have fought many brave men, but of all the brave men we ever fought, the Yellow Hair was the bravest."

## CHAPTER XVIII

### WHEN THE GHOST SHIRTS FAILED (1890)

#### PEACE ON THE BORDER

**T**HE battle of the Little Big Horn put the United States army in the West upon its mettle. Fresh troops were sent into the field. The posts were left with only corporal's guards.

General Crook the Gray Fox, whom the Sioux now called Three Stars, steadily hunted the Crazy Horse Cheyennes and Sioux. Band after band they were defeated and made to surrender.

The Cheyennes suffered the most. When they fled to the protection of Crazy Horse and his Sioux, Chief Crazy Horse would not feed them. He said that he had to take care of his Oglalas. Then the Cheyennes threw him away. They turned to the white chief.

"Take us as soldiers," they offered. "We will go with you to fight the Crazy Horse Sioux. This is true talk."

They all surrendered upon the Sioux reservation in South Dakota, and their best warriors were enlisted as scouts.

Crazy Horse now was to be pursued by a great army of white men and red men both. The Cheyennes, the Crows, the Winnebagos, the Snakes, even reservation Sioux themselves, were aiding the soldiers.

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## WHEN GHOST SHIRTS FAILED (1890)

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Colonel Nelson A. Miles, the Bear Coat, of the Fifth Infantry, found him, in the Wolf or Rosebud Mountains near the Custer battle ground, and shattered him, in January, 1877. In the spring he came in, to surrender to General Crook, at Fort Robinson, north-western Nebraska adjoining the Sioux reservation. In September he tried to escape, and was killed.

That was the end of Crazy Horse, a fighting chief who never allowed anybody to ride ahead of him, in battle, and who always gave away everything he had except his bow and gun and war ponies.

The Sitting Bull and Chief Gall Sioux had retreated for the north. It is told in "Boys' Book of Indian Warriors" how the Bear Coat kept striking at them and breaking them into bits, until Canada was the only refuge outside the reservations; and how, at last, in 1881, Sitting Bull, too, surrendered.

The Northern Cheyennes were at first placed upon the reservation of the Southern Cheyennes, in Indian Territory. There they sickened, and longed for their high north country, until they were made satisfied by their own reservation in the Montana which they loved.

The Sioux were quiet upon their Dakota reservation. But in 1889 the United States took the only good lands from them. They saw themselves poorer than ever, and starving.

Hope sprang up. Word came from the far west that a Messiah—the Christ of the Indians—had appeared. He promised life to the red people, death to the white people. The red people were to rule the land, as in the old days.



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Many of the tribes believed. The Sioux believed. They obeyed the teachings of the Messiah. They danced in Ghost Shirts of white cotton, which would blunt the white man's bullets. They grew restless, waiting for the promised time. When the Government tried to stop the dancing and the excitement, numbers of the Sioux ran away to the Dakota Bad Lands.

At this time there were five reservation tracts for the Sioux, in South Dakota. The Hunkpapa and Oglala agency of Standing Rock was on the north. Next, there was the Cheyenne River reservation. Next, the small Brulé reservation. Next, against the Nebraska line, the Rosebud reservation on the east and the Pine Ridge reservation on the west.

The Bad Lands were a patch of rough country in the northwest corner of the Pine Ridge reservation. In the center there was a high plateau, approached by a trail twenty feet wide. From the Bad Lands the Ghost Dancers defied the soldiers.

General Phil Sheridan was dead, and General Miles, the Bear Coat, was now in command of the western plains.

When it was seen that the Sioux were in rebellion, Miles was ordered by the War Department to bring them back to peace.

Forts and army posts bordered the Sioux reservations. General Miles had plenty of soldiers, within close call. Soon there were three thousand cavalry and infantry, under officers of the old days and of the new days, surrounding the reservations. He himself

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## WHEN GHOST SHIRTS FAILED (1890)

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took post at Rapid City, on the railroad at the western edge of the Pine Ridge reservation.

The troops were well armed. And what with the railroads, and the telegraph lines, the Sioux stood a poor show of escaping far from the Bad Lands. They would starve. The buffalo had vanished upon the plains, and winter enfolded all the country.

Sitting Bull was shot dead by the Indian police while resisting arrest at his home upon the Standing Rock reservation. This happened December 15. So he was out of the way. And General Miles acted wisely. Instead of attacking the Indians, as in the old days, he treated with them. Couriers were sent to them by the agents, warning them that they could not possibly break through the troops.

"Buffalo Bill" Cody had returned from a tour with his Wild West Show in Europe. He went to the reservations, to use his influence. All the Sioux knew Buffalo Bill. The Indians who had been in his show talked to their brothers and cousins. Big Road, who had fought at the Little Big Horn, and other chiefs, were enlisted, to talk.

The Government did not cut off the rations. The commanders of the army detachments were instructed to be patient. The Bad Land bands began to come in peaceably. The soldiers did not use force, but only closed behind them, and followed from camp to camp. Hump, another Big Horn veteran and war chief, who was a leader of the Ghost Dancers, came in and agreed to help the Government. Matters looked good.

But there was Sitanka or Big Foot of the Hunk-

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papas, who acted suspiciously. His village had been located beside the upper Cheyenne River, outside the Cheyenne River reservation, and he did not wish to move it. So Lieutenant-Colonel Edwin V. Sumner, of the Eighth Cavalry, whose father, General Edwin V. Sumner, had been a noted officer of the old dragoons, was ordered to bring Big Foot to Fort Mead, seventy miles west.

Big Foot explained to Colonel Sumner that he was not planning any wrong, and that he was going with his people to the Cheyenne River agency, to get rations. The agency was eighty-five or ninety miles east from the village. He started. Colonel Sumner rode after, and turned him back. On the way back, up river, the Big Foot people refused to go beyond their village. When they reached it they said that here they were, at home, where the Government had said that they should stay.

They numbered over three hundred. Colonel Sumner decided that it might be best to let them go to the agency, if they wished, and he would arrest Big Foot there. But the next day, December 23, they all struck their teepees and marched south, toward the Pine Ridge reservation and the Bad Lands.

The reason might have been, that they were frightened by another column of soldiers, closing in on them from the east. They were afraid of being punished because they had taken in some runaways from the Standing Rock reservation.

December 28 four troops of the Seventh Cavalry under Major Samuel M. Whitside headed off the Big

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Foot people before they had reached the Bad Lands.

"My people are sick. We are willing to do what you tell us to do," Big Foot said.

Many Sioux were indeed sick. They had been taken from their log houses and placed in tipi camps, around the Pine Ridge agency buildings, until the troubles simmered down. It was winter weather.

"I am not here to talk," Major Whitside answered. "You must surrender unconditionally or fight."

The Big Foot people raised the white flag, and went with Major Whitside into the Pine Ridge reservation. Camp was made on Wounded Knee Creek, twenty miles northwest of the agency. Colonel James W. Forsyth, whom the army called "Tony" Forsyth and who was not the "Sandy" Forsyth of Beecher's Island, arrived with four more troops of the Seventh. Captain Allyn Capron was here, with four Hotchkiss machine-guns of Battery E, First Artillery; and Lieutenant Charles W. Taylor, with a company of Sioux scouts.

The four hundred and seventy soldiers kept the one hundred and six warriors of Chief Big Foot under guard.

General Miles had planned to take the guns from the Big Foot people, and then send the people up to their own reservation. He looked for no trouble.

The cavalry, mounted and dismounted, and the scouts, surrounded the Big Foot camp; the Hotchkiss guns were placed so as to cover it. In the morning of December 29 the Big Foot people were asked to surrender their arms.

They had raised the white flag, again, on a pole in

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the center of the council ring. Chief Big Foot was very ill with pneumonia. Colonel Forsyth had given him a tent and put a stove in the tent, and had sent a surgeon to treat him. Other sick persons were given other tents. The weather was cold.

The warriors came out of their teepees and sat before them; but they turned over only two guns. So Colonel Forsyth ordered the soldiers to search the tents and teepees, for guns. They found thirty-eight more. The most of these were old and worn out.

The search irritated the Big Foot people. Dis-mounted cavalry had been drawn in very close, so that they were only ten paces from the warriors. The searching squads ransacked the bedding and other furnishings, to find the guns. And the Seventh cavalry troopers glared, for they remembered Custer and the Little Big Horn.

Yellow Bird, the medicine-man, now made the trouble break out. He had been walking about, blowing upon an eagle-bone medicine-whistle, and telling the Sioux, in their own language, that they wore Ghost Shirts, the bullets of the soldiers could do no harm and they should fight. The officers did not know what he said.

Then one of the searching soldiers stooped to lift the blanket of a warrior. The warriors all sat enveloped in their blankets. Underneath the blankets there were rifles, revolvers, knives and clubs. And then, on a sudden, Yellow Bird stooped also, and threw a pinch of dust into the air. As quick as a flash young Black Fox, a foolish brave, whipped out his Winchester and fired at the soldiers.

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## WHEN GHOST SHIRTS FAILED (1890)

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That was enough. The warriors sprang from their blankets. The soldiers dared take no chances—they delivered a volley at close range, which mowed down half the warriors. The other warriors had fired—they charged with revolvers, knives, clubs and hatchets; they broke through dismounted Troops B and K. The Hotchkiss machine-guns, outside, opened with two-pounder shells which streamed in at fifty a minute; in ten minutes two hundred Sioux and sixty soldiers were lying upon the snowy ground. The tents and teepees were burning, the remaining Indians were fleeing, pursued by the Hotchkiss shells.

The fighting was soon over. The Seventh Cavalry, remembering Custer, had killed right and left. The recruits in it lost their heads; they shot at every Indian in sight. And the Hotchkiss shells were terrible.

Chief Big Foot had been killed, in front of his tent. Captain George D. Wallace of Troop K, who had been a lieutenant at the Little Big Horn, was dead by bullet and hatchet, in the council ring. First Lieutenant Ernest A. Garlington of Troop K was wounded seriously. Second Lieutenant Harry L. Hawthorne of the Second Artillery, serving with the Hotchkiss battery, had his watch driven into his side. Captain Capron was seared by a bullet that passed half around him between skin and clothing.

In the excitement even Father Craft, the good Catholic priest of the agency, whom the Sioux loved, was mistaken for a soldier and stabbed—but he kept on attending to the dying.

In that one furor of fierce fighting thirty-one soldiers

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## BOYS' BOOK OF BORDER BATTLES

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had been killed, and about the same number wounded. Of the three hundred and seventy Sioux, more than two hundred had been killed, and many others wounded. The whole thing was a great pity.

Hearing of the battle, Indians from the Pine Ridge agency galloped in and attacked the troops. Chief Two-strike, whose name means Knocks-two-down, and another force attacked the agency itself. The Sioux police there held them off. The Catholic mission, five miles out, was besieged; the Seventh cavalry spurred to the rescue and was surrounded. Then Major Guy Henry made his famous ride of one hundred and ten miles in thirty hours, with his black Ninth Cavalry.

Four thousand Sioux gathered, in position to resist the troops. The alarm of a great uprising spread into Nebraska and western Iowa and into Minnesota; prayers were offered in churches, for protection from the red men. The Nebraska state militia were mobilized.

But much of that alarm was far-fetched. After several skirmishes, the Bear Coat, who understood Indians, and was respected by them, and who knew the wrongs that had made the Sioux desperate, persuaded the Sioux to surrender peaceably. He promised that he himself would talk for them to the Government.

So they came in on January 12, 1891; they gave up their guns; they were supplied with food.

Little property had been damaged, outside the reservations; only one settler was killed. Trooper W. H. Prather, of the negro Ninth Cavalry, wrote a ballad, of

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## WHEN GHOST SHIRTS FAILED (1890)

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five verses, about the "Ghost-Dance War." The soldiers and frontiersmen sang it lustily—

The Red Skins left their Agency, the Soldiers left their Post,  
All on the strength of an Indian tale about Messiah's ghost  
Got up by savage chieftains to lead their tribes astray;  
But Uncle Sam wouldn't have it so, for he ain't built that way.  
They swore that this Messiah came to them in visions deep,  
And promised to restore their game and Buffalos a heap,  
So they must start a big ghost dance, then all would join their hands  
And maybe-so they'd lead the way into the great Bad Lands.

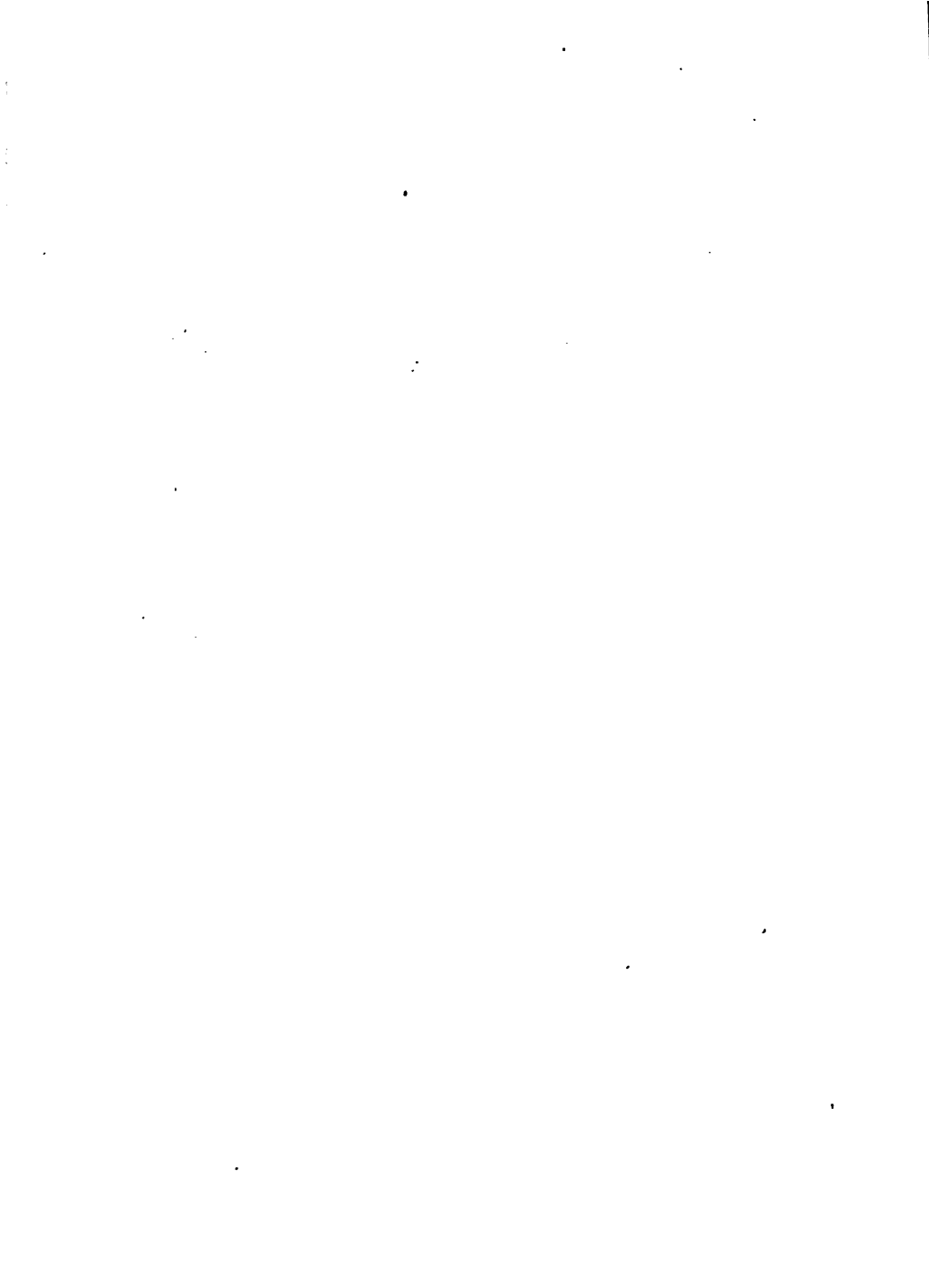
### CHORUS:

They claimed the shirt Messiah gave, no bullet could go through,  
But when the Soldiers fired at them they saw this was not true.  
The Medicine Man supplied them with their great Messiah's grace,  
And he, too, pulled his freight and swore the 7th hard to face.

Wounded Knee was scarcely a battle; it was a panic.  
But it ended the pitched border-battles of the white  
men and the red.

THE END











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